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1, Chess, 1876

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WAIFS AND STRAYS,

Chiefly from the Chess-board.

BY

CAPTAIN HUGH A. KENNEDY,

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH CHESS ASSOCIATION; LATE PRESIDENT OF THE BRIGHTON, BATH, AND BRISTOL ATHENÆUM CHESS CLUBS.

"Ludimus effigiem belli, simulataque veris
Prælia, buxo acies fictas, et ludicra regna."

VIDA. *Scacciæ Ludus.*

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TO

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF DARTREY,

PRESIDENT OF THE ST. GEORGE'S CHESS CLUB.

DEAR LORD DARTREY,

I have sincere pleasure in dedicating to you this little volume of Sketches and Essays, principally referring to "the most excellent game the wit of man has yet devised;" and in the practice of which you are so highly versed. That your Lordship may long continue to preside over the St. George's Chess Club is, I feel assured, the cordial desire of all its members, and of no one more than

Your faithful servant,

HUGH A. KENNEDY.

READING,
December, 1875.

PREFACE.

—:o:—

Of the additional matter which the present edition of this little book contains, the papers entitled "Buckle as a Chess-player," "Buckle's Chess References," and "Albany Fonblanque as a Chess-player," originally appeared in *The Westminster Papers*, and are given with the consent of Charles Mossop, Esq. "My Match at Chess with Herr Springbok," is a reprint from the American *Chess Monthly*.

Since a portion of these sketches was penned, a period of thirty years has elapsed, and, during that time, wide gaps have been made in the ranks of the generation of chess-players to which the writer belongs. Death has called away many of them, and the time-worn survivors, to whom the practice of hard chess is now very much a thing of the past, shouldering their crutches, regard with complacent

eye the achievements of their younger brethren of the exchequer; especially those who have fought their way to the front, and are worthily maintaining the honour and reputation of English Chess.

The four concluding articles were printed in *Punch* many years ago. I have appended them with the view of somewhat relieving the monotony of a naturally dry subject; although I by no means recommend Punch, in its ordinary liquid form, as an addition to chess over the board.

H. A. K.

READING,
December, 1875.

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Waifs and Strays.

SOME REMINISCENCES IN THE LIFE OF AUGUSTUS FITZSNOB, ESQ.

CHAPTER I.

It is certain that Mr. Thackeray cannot be a chess-player, otherwise he would have devoted at least one chapter of his instructive "Book of Snobs," to the delineation of Chess Snobs. That the *subject* is one admirably adapted for dissection by the keen and searching scalpel of the great anatomist of man and his meannesses, I think no one at all acquainted with chess and its votaries will venture to deny. Let it not be supposed, however, that I have any intention of attempting to supply the void left thus unfilled, to set my tiny cock-boat bobbing, as it were, in the wake of the powerful steam ship "Pendennis." Not at all: I simply propose to jot down here a few stray memories for the perusal of my brother chess-snobs, or any others that may favour me by reading them.

And, as I begin to consider the matter, the unpleasant thought strikes me that there may, perhaps,

exist a latent seed of snobbishness in almost every human mind, which contact with chess makes to germinate and sprout into life. If this be not the case, how is it that we constantly see persons of upright character, faultless manners, and whose tempers are proof against every common trial, the moment they seat themselves before a chess-board, undergoing a kind of moral metempsychosis, and becoming the very reverse of their ordinary selves—unjust, rude, and quarrelsome—in a word, unmitigated snobs? Perhaps the phenomenon may, in some sort, be accounted for in this way. A game of chess is essentially an argument, the board and men being accessories to the argument; that is, they are the outward symbols of the language in which it is carried on, but they are by no means necessary to it: indeed, I have heard of a saying amongst the Hungarians, who are fond of chess, and in the habit of contesting games while riding together on horseback, that the board and men only spoil the play.

A game of chess then, as I have said, is an argument. Every move is a definite stage in the controversy, and the result of certain analytical and combinative processes of thought. As the mental struggle proceeds, the more powerful debater gradually accumulates his facts and proofs, enmeshing and crushing the feebler reasonings of his antagonist, who at length either succumbs in despair, or is silenced by the inevitable mate. "But, Mr. Fitzsnob, this is exactly what takes place in argumentation of

any kind, and is not peculiar to chess." Not altogether, my dear sir, or madam; there is this difference. In an ordinary controversy it frequently happens that the weaker of the two disputants may possess the greater fluency of speech, and by the employment of logical subtleties, and the aid of dexterous and clever sophistry, may succeed in entirely evading the real point at issue, when he perceives that the argument is likely to go against him. Such a one, I say, will often quite dumbfound his abler opposite; although the latter, to use the words of Hazlitt, "may feel the whole weight of the question, nothing relating to it may be lost upon him, and yet he may be able to give no account of the manner in which it affects him, or to drag his reasons from their silent lurking-places."* Now at chess it is impossible to make the worse appear the better reason, and I submit that the explanation of its producing effects so disastrous on the temper is, that there is no refuge whatever for wounded *amour propre*. When there exists a disparity of force between two adversaries, sophistry will not avail the weaker player one jot. All his fallacies and cunning devices are foreseen, and remorselessly exposed and defeated by his opponent, and he cannot even have the consolation of the last word, because checkmate is the last word. The blow to self-love is complete, and the vanquished one has no option, but either to confess himself fairly beaten, like a gentleman, or to convert himself into a snob,

* Essay on Genius and Common Sense.

by inventing transparent excuses, or, it may be, by losing his temper outright.

I may literally be said to have imbibed chess with my mother's milk, as my first plaything was an ivory chess Queen, suspended to my waist, the smooth knob of which I mumbled with my infantile gums as a substitute for a coral. One of my earliest recollections is my standing by my father and mother while they played chess together. I would fain draw a filial veil over those encounters, but the truth is, that the two used to quarrel like cat and dog over their game. I can see before me now the brow of my respected sire growing black as midnight, and his eye gleaming with suppressed wrath, as his pitiless spouse captured one after another of his pieces. On the other hand, when my dear mamma was the loser, her voice rose shrilly into the air, and she trembled all over with excitement. Grief came to the unlucky urchin, who, on such an occasion, ventured within reach of the maternal arm. I suspect the chess discords of my exemplary parents must have equalled those of Count Ferrand of Flanders and his wife, although they did not result in such unpleasant consequences to my father as befell the unhappy Count.

Miss Wurzel, our governess, who cultivated chess, was kind enough to teach me the moves, and initiate me, generally, into the mysteries of the game. I proved an apt scholar, in fact, my progress was so rapid, that I soon played quite as well as my instructress. One fatal day, I happened, to my

great joy, to win three games running from her. My exultation was, however, but short lived, for, to my astonishment and fear, the fair Wurzel, who had hitherto been always as smooth as oil with me, started from her chair, and lending me a smart box on the ear, proceeded in her wrath to scatter the chessmen all over the floor. After such snobbish conduct I, of course, took care to play with her no more.

I am bound to say, however, that Miss Wurzel is the only female chess snob I have ever encountered. Many and many a score of games has Fitzsnob played in drawing-room and boudoir, and never received from the dear creatures (bless their hearts!) anything but ladylike treatment, and the height of civility. It was at chess that I first had the happiness to make the acquaintance of the lovely and beloved partner of my existence, Mrs. Fitzsnob. It was at chess that, one day, after having announced mate with the Queen in seven moves, unable any longer to restrain my feelings, in a transport of agitation I pushed away the table, and falling at her feet, declared my passion. She, dear soul! blushing like a rose, bent her sweet features over me, and coyly caressing with her hand my curled and oiled Assyrian locks, faltered out, "Oh! Mr. Fitzsnob, there is no resisting you." If any lady or gentleman desires to see the exact counterpart of this interesting *tableau*, let them look at Mr. Frank Stone's exquisite picture called "Mated," and they will behold it represented to the life.

The youthful age of sixteen beheld me a passenger on board the good ship *Toombudra*, bound for Madras, to which Presidency I was appointed a cadet. The *Toombudra* carried within her teak ribs the usual miscellaneous assortment of live cargo that East Indiamen transport to the land of the wavy palm. There was a Major-General Dudadub going out on the staff —a very magnificent personage, and an object of reverential awe to us young military aspirants. There were officers and civilians, married and single, returning to their duty from furlough, two or three mercantile gentlemen, sundry spinsters destined for the "Indian market," and lastly, a batch of some dozen cadets, including my worshipful self, harum-scarum lads just loose from school, and like young bears, with all their sorrows to come.

My principal associate during the voyage was one Captain Phelim O'Shaughnessy, and you may be sure the bond of union between us was chess. The captain was a tall, thin, wiry Milesian, with a saffron-coloured visage encircled by a pair of prodigious red whiskers, every hair of which was dear to him as the apple of his eye. I believe the chief part of his time on board, that was not spent on chess, he devoted to brushing, oiling, and curling these capillary appendages, by which there hangs the following incident.

We touched on our passage at the island of Madeira, where Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, in order to divert the *ennui* of a long voyage, had procured a pair of canary birds, which were great favourites with her,

one of her chief occupations on board being to tend and pet them. When we reached the latitude of the Cape, it became extremely cold, and the moss that had been brought from their native home to keep them warm, being expended, these feathered warblers were in danger of perishing from the severity of the weather. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, however, being a woman of resource, was not long in devising a remedy for the theatened evil. Her husband, while tranquilly smoking a cheroot one forenoon on the poop, was summoned in haste down to his cabin, and commanded to shave off his whiskers without loss of time, for the purpose of their being converted into nests for the canaries. Honest Phelim's horror and surprise at this injunction must be imagined, for it is quite beyond my power of description. I believe he would just as soon have shaved off his ears as his whiskers; and although ordinarily the most compliant of mortals to the wishes of his better half, on the occasion of this meditated "most unkindest cut," he proved utterly restive. Entreaties, objurgations, and even tears, were lavished on him in vain, and after a violent conjugal wrangle, which was audible over all the after part of the ship, the captain, still unshorn, rushed up on deck, which he paced with long strides for about a couple of hours, ever and anon passing a hand over his cheeks, as if to assure himself that his hairy honours were still thick about him, and whistling "The night before Larry

was stretched," with the utmost vigour of his lungs.

At first we used to have our chess in O'Shaughnessy's cabin, from which, however, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, not without gentle remonstrance on the part of her husband, soon ejected us. Indeed, the good lady could not abide chess, and once went so far as to say in my hearing that she thought no chess-player could go to heaven; so, during the rest of the voyage, we always fought our battles in my small cabin. When the weather was fine, and the ship going steadily, we sat on two bullock-trunks, with the board on my washstand. When the old craft, tossed by the waves, staggered along in her cups, we ensconced ourselves in the standing bed-place, O'Shaughnessy coiling his long legs up at one end, while I wedged myself in at the other, and we held the large peg-board between us.

The gallant O'Shaughnessy was but a very poor player; so indifferent, indeed, was his skill, that real chess might be said to begin where he left off: but this circumstance did not at all interfere with his intense love of the pastime; in fact, he considered himself a splendid player, and far superior to me, of whom he seldom won a game, which he accounted for by attributing his losses entirely to my good luck. He utterly scorned, however, the idea of taking odds, and one day, when I ventured to hint something of the kind to him, I thought he would have eaten me.

"You young spalpeen!" he cried, "what do you mean by talking about odds? I'm amazed at your impudence. No man, Sir, can give me odds. I wouldn't have taken any from Philidor. It's true enough that you win more games than I do, but that's because you are the luckiest little beggar that ever was born. If you have the same good fortune in your promotion as you have at chess, you will get your company before you can show a hair to your chin."

But, in spite of occasional outbreaks of spleen such as this, old Shaugh and I were excellent friends, and continued so till his death. He was killed at Mahidpoor by a Pindarrie matchlock ball, while leading his regiment into action as a Lieut.-Colonel. I saw him fall, and had the satisfaction, with a thrust of my sword, of letting daylight into the midriff of the ugly black scoundrel who shot him. Peace be with him! he was an honest man in every sense of the word; a staunch friend, a brave soldier, and snobbish in nothing save his chess, and probably his whiskers.

Soon after my arrival at Madras, I was appointed to a corps stationed at the Presidency, and speedily set to work to learn the routine of regimental duty. Having tolerably well mastered this, I thought it time to turn my attention to the native language, and accordingly requested the Adjutant to send to my quarters the regimental Moonshee, under whose tuition I proposed to beg in my Hindostani studies

I was lying next morning on a sofa lazily smoking a cheroot, and hopelessly eyeing the twisted characters of the Bagh-o-Bahar, or "Garden of Delight" (how the book came by such a name I do not know, to *me* it was always a complete "Slough of Despond,") when a tall, dignified-looking native stepped into the room, and making a salaam, announced himself as my Moonshee.

"*Kaisa hye, Moonshee ?*"* said I, willing to show him that I knew something of the language already.

"*Ap ki meherbāni seatchā hong,*"† he replied.

"Hem," said I, "what is your name ?"

"Ghulam Kassim, *sahib.*"

"What, Ghulam Kassim the chess-player ?"

"*Ho, sahib.*"‡

My languor departed in a trice, and springing up I cast into the air the "Garden of Delight," which volume meeting in its descent the head of my body-servant, Verasawmy, who was removing the breakfast things, carried the turban of that worthy domestic clean off his head. "*Kumbucht !*" § I shouted to him, "bring the chess-board."

As Ghulam Kassim passed several hours daily in my bungalow, I soon got credit in the regiment for being a most diligent student of the Hindostani tongue. I am afraid, however, the time spent at that

* How are you, Moonshee ?

† By your honour's favour I am quite well.

‡ Yes, sir.

§ You fellow of little luck !

work, compared with the space devoted to chess, bore much the same proportion that Falstaff's halfpenny worth of bread did to his intolerable quantity of sack.

The famous chess match by correspondence between Madras and Hydrabad was then in progress. It consisted of two games, played simultaneously, and, as everybody knows, both were won by Madras. The chief direction of the Madras forces was in the hands of Ghulam Kassim and Mr. James Cochrane of the Civil Service, an able and enthusiastic amateur, who afterwards published the games, with notes by his native coadjutor. In the latter part of the match they availed themselves of the services of Ensign Fitznob to assist them in the analysis, and that juvenile officer felt proud in being selected to take this minor part in so great a contest.

The Hydrabad braves were led by the renowned Mahratta Chess-Chief, Hurry Punt, and Purneah, a Brahmin, who held some post about the court of Nizam. After making the seventeenth move in the first game, and the sixteenth in the second, poor Hurry Punt made his own last move in this life, being checkmated by Cholera, an adversary whose attacks few have the power to resist, so that it may be termed the Morphy of diseases. The death of his ally left Purneah generalissimo of the Hydrabad troops, and the learned Pundit made gallant and strenuous efforts to stem the adverse tide of fortune: he was unsuccessful, but, like Soult in the Pyrenees, he gathered glory even in defeat. After losing his Queen

for a Rook in one of the games, he fought the termination with unflinching skill and pluck, and was within an ace of forcing a draw. The manœuvring of Ghulam in that ending is a good specimen of his chess ability, and would not discredit any one of the great guns of the present day.

I must now mention a piece of tribulation which my weakness for chess was partly the means of bringing upon me. I was quartered at Bangalore, one of the largest military stations in the South of India, where we had a theatre, in which the officers of the regiment gave frequent amateur representations. On the occasion to which I refer they were to enact Colman's play of the "Poor Gentleman," in which the part of Ollapod, the apothecary and cornet of volunteer horse, was allotted to me. There was to be a dress rehearsal of the comedy on the evening before the actual performance, and I, unfortunately, was subaltern of the cantonment main guard on the day of the said rehearsal. What was to be done? I was very anxious to go to the theatre, and yet to leave my guard would be a military offence of the gravest kind. After many doubts and fears, inclination prevailed over duty, and I determined to run the risk of discovery. The only probable danger I apprehended was the customary visit to the guard of the field-officer of the day, but that was not usually made before eleven o'clock, while I could easily be back by half-past nine. Everything turned out as I had hoped. The rehearsal went off capitally, and was

applauded to the echo by a house full of serjeants and privates—Ollapod, let me tell you, coming in for no small share of *kudos*. At the conclusion of the performance, without losing time in changing my dress, I hurried back in high spirits to my guard, which I reached even earlier that I had expected. So far all was well, but, as ill-luck would have it, I found on the table a letter from Ghulam Kassim, brought during my absence, containing a most interesting chess position, which he begged me to examine and report upon to him without delay. Forthwith out came the chess-board, the pieces were set up, and I soon became completely absorbed in their study. In what seemed to me scarcely five minutes afterwards, although, in reality, an hour and a half had elapsed, a Havildar came into the room with the astounding intelligence that the field-officer of the day was close at hand. Here was a predicament! Instead of the modest regimentals of the Catamaran Native Infantry I was accoutred in the uniform of the redoubtable Cornet Ollapod, of the Galen's Head, viz.—a bobtailed scarlet jacket, tastily turned up with rhubarb-coloured lappels, and profusely decorated with cotton lace; *item*, buckskin breeches; *item*, huge jack-boots to mid-thigh; *item*, a pair of enormous spurs affixed to the heels of the jack-boots. Thinks I to myself, "It's all up with you now, Ensign Augustus Fitzsnob; your commission's not worth an anna, my boy." However, as there was nothing else for it, I seized my chaco and sword, and bolted outside, to turn out the guard.

I found the Soubadar had already fallen the men in, and as I went to take my place in front, the diabolical spurs jingling at every step, an audible snigger ran through the ranks at my extraordinary guise, and, by Jove, in spite of my misery, I could scarcely help laughing myself. The field-officer of the day chanced to belong to my own regiment; Tremenheere was his name. He was much liked in the corps, and had more than once befriended and given me good advice in difficulties into which my youth and inexperience had led me. But he was a strict disciplinarian, and I felt certain would not overlook my present offence. The night, however, was somewhat foggy, and as I knew the Major's vision was none of the best, I was not without hope that the singularity of my costume might possibly escape his notice. He rode up, halted his horse just before me, and sat looking in silence over the animal's ears for about a minute. The perspiration ran in streams down my face! At last he said slowly, "Is the guard all right, sir?" "All right, sir," I replied; and sure enough the guard *was* all right, its officer only was in the wrong box. "Good night, sir," and as he spoke he wheeled round his horse, and cantered off in the direction of the fort, to visit the main guard there. As the fumes of my Trichinopoly weed ascended into the air that night, there mingled with them a fervent vow that neither theatricals nor chess should ever tempt me again into such a perplexity.

The next day as I entered our mess-house, Tre-

menheere, who was walking in the verandah, came up to me, and said with a grim smile:—"Well, Master Ollapod, how do you feel to-day? I saw you last night, my lad, but I *wouldn't* see you. Take a friend's advice, young fellow, and don't practice any more tricks like that, or I wouldn't give a dump for your chance of being a lieutenant."

My recollection of the Chess Divan in the Strand extends to nearly twenty years back. In those days it had a much quieter appearance than it wears now, with its velvet settees and multiplicity of mirrors. There was a large self-performing organ in one corner of the room—a dismal instrument, which, under the auspices of the head waiter, Simpson (alas, poor Simpson!) who wound it, and set it going at intervals, croaked out lugubrious melodies to the assembly, and played dirge to many a lost game of the present writer. It was a white-stone day with me on which that infernal machine disappeared for ever from the premises. Daniels was then lord of the ascendant in the place, a subtle and elegant player, with a judgment of position that was rarely at fault. He was a light in Caïssa's firmament too early quenched. Thither came Stanley, of New York, then in the heyday of youth, and full of jest and merriment; also a mighty awkward customer, *me ipso teste*, to encounter at chess. Should these poor lines meet his eye in the country of his adoption, I beg him to accept the cordial salutation of his old acquaintance, Fitzsnob. Tuckett too was a

regular frequenter, a fine player, and a thorough gentleman, without a grain of snobbishness in his whole composition. Buckle was also a *habitué;* his chess star was then just beginning to twinkle above the horizon: it soon culminated, and shone for many years in the Divan with a light brilliant and serene. And there was invariably to be seen the placid face of the venerable *père* Alexandre, his head simmering with problems, and emitting, between the puffs of his cigar, all sorts of old-world talk about the game in which his mind was centred, and to the elucidation of which he devoted the leisure of a life of more than eighty years. Alexandre told me, that on one occasion during an illness of Mouret, he occupied for a month's play the interior of Kempelen's automaton, as conductor of the androïd. He said he did not mind the confinement much, but the necessary deprivation of his "baccy" was a sore grievance, and detracted, he thought, at least Pawn and move from his game.

It was in the Divan that I first met the great German singer, Staudigl, the mellow, sonorous tones of whose matchless voice in the unearthly music of Robert le Diable, like the murmur of ocean heard afar off, again swell grandly on my ear even as I write these words. Staudigl had a perfect mania for chess, which he played with great rapidity and characteristic energy; he would think nothing of dashing off a matter of ten games in the course of two or three hours' sitting. I remember once being

at Brighton, where I had gone to give my better half, and her snoblings, a taste of the sea air, when Staudigl came down to sing at a concert. Meeting him in the afternoon on the Cliff, we forthwith repaired to the chess-club on the Pier Esplanade, and played for several hours without taking any thought of time. In the middle of a game, a breathless messenger rushed into the club-room, and informed my opponent that a crowded audience was impatiently expecting his appearance. Staudigl seemed to think very little of this intelligence, and was rather for finishing his game: at last, however, with a reluctant glance at the board, he went off to fulfil his engagement at the Town Hall. Poor fellow! he died about two years ago, I believe, in a *maison de santé* at Vienna.

Not to be forgotten, either, is a jovial, good-natured Frenchman, M. Pion Coiffé by name, who obtained no small celebrity in the Divan, not for the excellence, but for the badness of his play. The odds for which he always stipulated were Queen, three Pawns and the move, and it mattered not who his adversary was, he would play on no lower terms. Staunton, however, increased these tremendous odds by giving him *four* Pawns in addition to the Queen. "*Monsieur*," he would say, "*vous me rendrez la dame, trois pions, et le trait; je ne bouge pas de là.*" His invariable stake was a sovereign, and he seldom lacked an opponent. He was always ready to back himself freely amongst the lookers on, of whom he generally commanded a large gallery,

from which the remarks of the chief performer, Pion Coiffé himself, as well as the positions evoked by the extraordinary nature of the odds, frequently elicited roars of laughter. A curious peculiarity in this jolly Gaul was, that he would sometimes make half-a-dozen successive moves in a difficult position, quite as well as the strongest player could do, and then wind up by committing some horrible *balourdise* which ruined him.

M. Pion Coiffé for the most part carried on his combinations, not like other people, mentally, but aloud, so that his opponent had the benefit of his ingenious ideas, whatever that might amount to. He would say, for instance, pointing to a Pawn *en prise*, "I think I shall take dat leetle fellow; why should I not? But, stop; why, why did you leave him dere? Aha! you *want* me to take him; I will dees-appoint you, I will not take him." On first coming to England, M. Pion Coiffé made zealous but not very successful attempts to master our language and pronunciation. Once, at the Ruy Lopez chess-club, wishing to speak in praise of an absent member, for whom he had conceived a liking, he thus delivered himself:—"He is a very nice gentleman, Mistare Smeeth; I am so fond of heem; bot (with a melancholy shake of the head) I fear he is *bloody fool!*" Those present stared with surprise, until it came out that the worthy fellow only meant to express an apprehension that his friend Mr. Smith's constitution was too sanguineous, or full of blood.

Those jocund times have glided into the irrevocable past, and the Divan is now filled by another generation of chess players, that knows not Fitzsnob, who can now only gently babble of bygone hours, a mere *laudator temporis acti*, and too surely sensible that

> "His days are datyd,
> To be chekmatyd."

CHAPTER II.

VARIOUS are the aspects in which it has fallen to my lot to regard the game of chess. It has been played by me in many places, and with all sorts and conditions of men. On the summit of the Neilgherry Hills, at an altitude of eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, amidst some of the finest scenery ever beheld by the eye of man; where, from a sheer height of five thousand feet, the view extends over the fertile districts of the kingdom of Mysore, itself a table-land three thousand feet over the ocean level, taking in the ruined battlements of Seringapatam, the ancient stronghold of Hyder Ali, full seventy miles away, with the majestic river Cauvery winding through the plains, and reduced by distance to the size of a shining thread of silver.—In the palace of Tanjore, with the Rajah of that principality, a man of education and enlightened understanding, whose youth had been carefully trained by Swartz, the most apostolic and devoted of all Christian missionaries. His dusky highness, let me tell you, was a tough opponent at *Shatranj;* and besides that, was a better classical scholar, and possessed more general knowledge of European science and literature than many a white face of my acquaintance.—At Trichinopoly, a

locality famed in Anglo-Indian story for the exploits of Lawrence, the stout-hearted soldier, under whose eye, and stimulated by whose example, the budding military genius of the great Clive put forth its first shoots. My principal chess competitor there was a Brahmin priest from the neighbouring pagoda of Seringham. This expounder of the Shaster and Puranas was a saintly personage, whose body exhaled a fragrant odour of cocoa-nut oil, and who rarely opened his oracular jaws save for the reception of a quid of pawn and betel, or to say "check" or "checkmate;" which last word issued pretty frequently from his lips, for my cow-cherishing friend, I must avow, was considerably beyond my then chess fathom.—At the Cape of Good Hope, where I spread my chess-board in the blushing vineyards of the Paarl, to do battle with an elephantine Dutch wine-farmer, at whose house I boarded for some time, and who mightily affected the noble game. Mynheer Cloëte weighed eighteen stone, and was by no means a despicable adversary; but his mind, sharing in the ponderous nature of his body, made his ideas flow sluggishly, and he was in consequence a very tedious and inert player. I recollect one day, when he was more than usually tardy over a move, that I went out to take a turn on the *stöep* in front of the house, leaving him staring at the pieces in a profound "cogibundity of cogitation." On going in again shortly afterwards, I found my man mountain with his head placidly reclining on the board, and fast asleep!

With a provident care, not uncommon among the Cape Boers, my host had his coffin (and a sizeable one it was, too) ready in the house against the time he should want it. He has taken possession of that final abode, I doubt not, long ere this, for I am writing of a quarter of a century back, and honest Cloëte was no chicken even then.—At the Edinburgh chess-club, as a member of which, my late excellent friend Baillie Donaldson put me through my facings, and made his chess rattan whistle about my ears—not unprofitably, I hope. The worthy Baillie was a great leveller of pretension, and taught me something of the precept "know thyself," a knowledge hard to attain in chess; indeed, it is my belief there is no chess-player in the world who does not rate himself at least Pawn and move above his proper strength.—In a May Fair *salon*, where, inhaling the sweet perfume of flowers, and with, mayhap, some dying strain of Meyerbeer or Rossini from harp or piano thrilling in my ear, I have sat opposite a fair being, whose jewelled ivory fingers sparkled over the pieces, while her still brighter eyes made sad havoc of my fine combinations.—In the frowsy cabin of a Hull steamer, where, indifferent alike to unsavoury smells and the groans of the sea-sick, by the aid of a Hebrew chess-brother with a velvet waistcoat and most unclean digits, I extemporised out of soda-water corks (blackening a moiety of them with ink) a handsome set of chessmen, with which the Israelite aforesaid and myself played fraternally during the passage on

the exterior of a ragged old backgammon board.—At the "St. George's," in King Street, St. James's, where you may cross Pawns with the upper crust of London society. At the "London," in Cornhill, the oldest chess-club in England, but still flourishing in pristine vigour, as in the days of Lewis,* Cochrane, Fraser, and Mercier, under the shadow (may it never be less) of the Prince of Presidents, Mongredien. Finally, at the "Shades," in Leicester Square, which, if its name be taken in conjunction with the heat of its atmosphere, may be termed the Chess Orcus of the modern Babylon.

These are but an insignificant fraction of my chess experiences. Were I to run over the whole of them, I suppose that many numbers of the *Chess Monthly* would not contain what I should have to say.

Behold me now, embarked in the fast-sailing vessel *Burrumpooter*, Josiah Hornblow commander, from Calcutta to London. I am going to Europe on sick furlough, as thin and as yellow as a bamboo, and with a slightly congested liver. But what of that? I have a furious appetite; every gulp I take of the bracing salt-sea air has the effect of champagne on

* I speak of Mr. Lewis in the past tense only as regards chess, which he has long ceased to practise. He is still, I am happy to think, with us in the flesh; and long may he continue to survive, the sole remaining link between this generation and the knot of fine old English chess-players who adorned the early part of the present century. Mr. Cochrane, too, I believe, still keeps up his favourite game in distant Calcutta, with no diminution of his ancient strength and brilliancy.

my spirits, and there is "home, sweet home," with all its old endearing memories, beckoning to me in the distance. For three years to come, at all events, there will be for me no more turning out at four in the morning to the summons of the bugle for drill or parade; no more hot and weary marches; no more treasure escorts; no more wigging from pompous commandant, or surly adjutant; no more jabbering of Hindostani to Soubadars and Sepoys. Hurrah! for England. Our gallant ship throws the foam from her bows, gracefully courtseying to the azure sea, as she glides like a swan through its dimpling waters.

> "Forth to the breeze she unbosoms her sail,
> And her pennon streams onward, like Hope in the gale."

My first business after settling myself on board was to look out for a chess antagonist. I was not long in discovering two, in the persons of Mr. Macwhirter, the surgeon of the vessel, and Mr. Mulligrub, a Bengal indigo planter. The latter gentleman, however, for the first week or so, eschewed chess altogether, confining himself to simple arithmetic, and diligently cast up his accounts, gazing intently the while at the bottom of a pewter basin. Macwhirter was a shrewd, long-headed Scotchman, with apretty wit, and a thorough knowledge of his profession. He had seen much of the world, and was a companion both instructive and amusing, but perhaps addicted a little overmuch to the discussion of what he called *metafeesics.*

He was desperately enamoured of chess, and soon inspired me with considerable respect for his play, He had no acquaintance with the books; indeed, had never opened a work on chess in his life, and was consequently deficient in the openings; but after having fought his way through the commencement to the middle game, his natural aptitude for the thing soon became apparent. He had a good imagination, calculated accurately, and when he happened to gain an advantage in the shape of either piece, pawn, or position, clung to it with desperate tenacity. We played together nearly every day while the voyage lasted, and during all that time we never had a difference of any kind. My opponent was one of those rare chess birds who are always pleasant and kind in their manner, and possessed an equanimity which neither success nor defeat had power to disturb.

Mr. Macwhirter had an amusing peculiarity connected with his chess, which I must not omit to mention. He was a very fine performer on the violin; indeed, quite a master of the instrument, on which I have heard him play in a manner "to wile a bird aff a tree," as they say in Scotland. It was generally his custom to retire to his cabin for the half hour preceding dinner, and recreate himself with a tune on his fiddle. On a day when he had been victorious at chess, which was not uncommonly the case, there would be heard to issue from his retreat strains of triumph and rejoicing, such as "Rule Britannia,"

"Sound the loud Timbrel," "The De'il came fiddling thro' the Town," &c. But when Fortune had shaken her swift wings, and deserted the good *medico*, "Oh! leave me to my sorrow," "The Land o' the Leal," and such like dolorous melodies floated from his den through the ambient air; so that the word always went through the ship, "The Doctor has won," or "The Doctor has got the worst of it to-day," according to the style of his music. By the way, what a curious thing it is that a predilection for music should be so often found in alliance with chess power. It would certainly at first sight appear that there is little or nothing in common between the two, and yet the fact is indisputable. Instances innumerable might be adduced to prove that fine chess-players have almost invariably a strong natural turn for music. I believe phrenologists account for the circumstance by stating that the organs of number and time are largely developed in the crania of the followers of both Caïssa and Euterpe.

Mr. Matthew Mulligrub, cultivator of indigo in the district of Azimgeur, was a chess snob of purest ray serene, and also a bore not inferior in power of annoyance to either the Ancient Mariner or the Old Man of the Sea, the two greatest bores, I fancy, upon record. He was a personage of wondrous self importance, with a paunchy development of body, a large head, short thighs, and diminutive legs. His obese appearance was a very sore point with Mr. Mulligrub, and being one day rallied on it

by us wags, he asked Dr. Macwhirter, who was standing by, whether he considered him to be at all stout. "Stoot!" replied the doctor, "stoot! "Man, ye're a pairfect swine! He had a large stock of stories, all turning on the wonderful things he had achieved in shooting tigers and other wild animals in India, and these dreary narratives he inflicted indiscriminately on every passenger on board, until we were all thoroughly sick of him. His voice was pitched in a high key, and he spoke with a slight stutter, and an indescribably wearisome drawl, clinching every thing he said with "What d'ye think of that?" Here is a compressed specimen of one of his veracious exploits.

Mr. Mulligrub happening to be out one day shooting jungle fowl, somewhere in the neighbourhood of his station, suddenly espied, not more than a hundred yards off, a tremendous Bengal tiger, crouched down in the very act of preparing for a spring at him. His fowling piece contained only small shot, and to fire therefore would be worse than useless. A death, immediate and horrible, stared him in the face. In this dreadful extremity, however, his usual fortitude and high presence of mind did not forsake him; a resource, whereby his life might be saved, flashed through his brain, and he lost no time in putting it into execution. Throwing his piece on the ground, he wheeled swiftly to the right about, and stooping down with his back to the tiger, placed his head between his legs. In

this position, looking full at his terrible foe, he began to twist his features into a series of the most hideous grins he could devise, shouting all the while at the top power of his lungs the Irish "coronach," or death lament. The experiment was perfectly successful. The savage animal sprang to his feet, stood gazing for a moment or two, (which appeared hours to the inverted Matthew) in mute astonishment at the singular phenomenon presented to his view, and then, with a fierce roar of disappointment and affright, fairly turned tail and made off. The valiant Mulligrub, instantly resuming his perpendicular, caught up his gun, and triumphantly peppered the rear of his retreating foe with its contents. He experienced no other inconvenience from this adventure than a tingling in the ears and a sensation of fulness in the head for a few hours afterwards, the effect of the unnatural posture he had been compelled to assume.

Our commander, Captain Hornblow, a bluff, outspoken old seaman, conceived an intense dislike to Mulligrub from the very first. A day or two after we had sailed, he came up to me as I was walking on the poop, and said, pointing to the tiger-slayer, who was at that moment in grief, with his head over the side of the ship,—

"D'ye see that chap there, catting to windward like a lubber, as he is? I hate him, Sir; I would give five shillings to have him hove overboard, Sir."

"Why," said I, laughing, "what has the poor fellow done, Captain? He seems harmless enough at present; has he given you any offence?

"No offence at all," answered the jolly skipper, "but I don't like the cut of his jib; and I'm mistaken if he turns out anything but a bad lot."

I continued my walk, repeating to myself, after Martial,—

> "Non amo te Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare,
> Hoc solum novi, non amo te Sabidi."

Touching his chess, I really think Mulligrub was the most ineffable snob I ever met, and that is saying a good deal. I do not know whether it was most unpleasant to beat him, or be beaten by him. If he happened to have the best of a game, he would make sneering comments on his opponent's play, with a patronising air of condescension that was very trying to the temper; and when he was losing, he used to growl and snap over his pieces like a dog with a bone that another dog is looking at. I never saw him lose a game which he did not declare he ought to have gained at some particular point, where he "made a mistake." He could manage to win perhaps one game in eight from Macwhirter or myself, and that solitary victory was a complete salve to the wounds inflicted in his self-esteem by the seven defeats. It is hardly necessary to say that he repudiated as an absurdity the notion of accepting odds, and proved to

Macwhirter syllogistically that he could not give him any. Says he to the Doctor,—

"There are the board and men. You can see them, and I can see them; but you cannot see them any better than I can: therefore, you cannot give me odds. What d'ye think of that?"

"What do I think of it?" quoth the Doctor, with much gravity; "why, man, that's just the same kind o' seelogism as the famous one, *Qui dormit non peccat; qui non peccat salvabitur: ergo, qui dormit salvabitur.*" *

"Exactly" replied Mulligrub, who did not understand one word of Latin, "that is just what I mean."

Let me here mention that our excellent Doctor had a large repertory of old-world Scotch incidents and anecdotes, which he told with a dry humour peculiar to himself. I recollect two good ones, which I don't think are to be found in Dean Ramsay's collection.

A philosophical old farmer, who dwelt in the kingdom of Fife, when misfortune or ill luck of any kind overtook him, was wont to console himself with the reflection, "It micht hae been waur," and this phrase was invariably on his lips in the event of mishap to himself or his friends. It chanced that his wife was taken suddenly ill and died, on which melancholy occasion it was represented to him that he could not now say "It micht hae been waur," as

* "He who sleeps does not sin; he who does not sin shall be saved, therefore, he who sleeps shall be saved." (This for the benefit of the one thousand and one lady readers of the "Chess Monthly.")

no worse evil can befall a man than to lose a good wife. "It micht hae been waur," responded the afflicted widower, "it micht hae been *mysel!*"

In the town of Aberdeen there practised a certain writer or attorney, whose roguish practices had acquired for him the unenviable *sobriquet* of "scoundrel Grant." In the same place there also resided an outspoken old gentleman, Mochrie by name, who was possessed with a mortal antipathy to the aforesaid Grant. This senior, being a guest at a large dinner party; after the now happily exploded fashion of the time, was, in his turn, called on to propose a toast when the cloth had been removed. "Well, gentlemen," said the old boy, "I'll give ye a *tost*, here's "high hanging to scoondrel Grant," which was solemnly drunk by the assembled *convives*. A day or so afterwards Messrs. Mochrie and Grant met in the street, the latter having been previously made aware, by some kind friend, of the compliment that had been paid to him at the dinner. Angrily accosting Mr. Mochrie, he said, "is it true, sir, that you gave as a toast the other evening, 'high hanging to scoundrel Grant?'" "Yes," replied the other, "ye have been rightly informed; I did give that tost." "Then, sir," said Grant in a fury, "I suppose you are prepared to take the consequences of such a proceeding?" "God bless my heart! sir," answered Mochrie, cocking his eye at his interlocutor with an air of surprise, "are ye scoondrel Grant?" "No!" roared Grant, "I am not." "Then," quoth

the veteran, deliberately helping himself to a pinch of snuff, "if ye're not scoondrel Grant, I should like to know what ye have got to do with my tost?"

We touched at the Mauritius, where we spent a few days very pleasantly, and picked up there, as a passenger, no less a personage than Theodore Hook, who was going home on account of some difficulties connected with his office as Treasurer of the Colony. He told Lord Charles Somerset, at the Cape, where we remained a week, in reply to a question of his lordship, that a complaint of the *chest* was the occasion of his voyage to England. Hook was then in the prime of manhood, a fine-looking fellow, with a head of dark curly hair, and a pair of black eyes that sparkled with vivacity and intellect. He was always up to any kind of fun, and his overflowing spirits seemed to infuse new life into our jaded and bile-devoured society. A few days after we sailed he did us the great service of shutting up for some time our Old Man of the Sea, Mr. Mulligrub. That estimable individual, to the no small disgust of his victim, had joyfully fastened on Hook when he first came on board, as a new auditor and receptacle for his dreary rhodomontades.

One Saturday evening we were all in the cuddy, drinking our grog, and toasting sweethearts and wives, with the snob of snobs in greater force than ever. After spinning one of his eternal yarns he turned to Hook, and said,—

"What d'ye think of that, Mr. Hook?"

"Why, sir," said Theodore, blandly, "if you ask my opinion, I think of it exactly as Sandy M'Craw did of the minister's sermon."

"Indeed, sir! and pray what was that?" asked the other.

"Well," returned Hook, "you must know that the minister of Auchtermuchty was a divine in the habit of preaching discourses, considered by himself marvels of pulpit eloquence, but which his obstinate Scotch hearers persisted in regarding as little better than froth and fustian, an opinion in which they were quite correct. One Sunday, after giving his congregation a screed of doctrine, as he thought, of more than common unction, he began to fish for a compliment from his clerk, Sandy M'Craw, who was taking off his reverence's gown in the vestry, but not a word could he extract from the impenetrable Sandy. Tired of beating about the bush to no purpose, he at last said,

"Well, Sandy, what d'ye think of my sermon to-day?"

"Ou," grunted Sandy, "nae doot ye're muckle the better noo that ye hae got a' that blether aff yer stamach!"

We all roared with laughter: poor Mulligrub looked as if he had got an attack of the plural of his own name, and Captain Hornblow, next to whom Hook was sitting, after exploding with a loud guffaw, further expressed his delight by slipping his hand below the table, and seizing the calf of the wit's leg with a grasp that made him wince again.

CHAPTER III.

After leaving the Cape we bowled away for St. Helena with the south-east trade right aft, and reached it in twelve days. The attention of the whole civilised world was then concentrated upon this spot of rock in the Atlantic, as being the prison of Napoleon. The appearance of the place, as you approach it, is desolate and repulsive in the extreme. Not a trace of vegetation is to be seen, but only precipitous masses of the volcanic rock of which the island is composed, piercing the sky with their jagged edges, and seeming to present an impenetrable barrier to all access. And yet this husk, so rough and uninviting, encloses a kernel of rare beauty. The interior of St. Helena abounds in scenery of surprising loveliness. From the great basaltic ridge that forms the back-bone of the island, narrow valleys radiate towards the sea, refreshing the eye with the verdure of grassy slopes, variety of foliage, and springs of the purest water. Passing Rupert's Bay and Hill, the latter bristling with cannon, we rounded into the anchorage before James Town, where were riding the flag-ship of the Admiral commanding the station, two or three Indiamen, and some smaller craft. In the offing we could see men of war cruising on the look-out for suspicious sail.

I lost no time in going ashore, and engaged an apartment at the boarding-house of Mr. Abraham, an Israelite without guile, who *took in* visitors at the moderate charge of two pounds sterling per diem. After strolling a little about James Town, Hook and I agreed to ride together to Deadwood, where the gallant 66th Foot, in which regiment we both had friends, was encamped. We had some difficulty in procuring horses, owing to the great demand for them, but at last a pair of very sorry hacks were brought to the door for our use. Hook, as he bestrode his Rosinante, compared him to Arthur O'Bradley's celebrated mare, and we started from our hostelry, he singing,—

> "She was windgall'd and spavin'd and blind,
> And lame of the off-leg behind;
> She'd got such abundance of bone,
> That he called her a high-bred roan;
> He chose her because she was blood,
> And the pride of his father's stud,
> And a credit to Arthur O'Bradley," &c.

Emerging from the steep acclivity that leads out of James Town, we came upon some lovely upland scenery, and passing Hutts Gate with Longwood on our right, we reached Deadwood, where the 66th were housed in comfortable wooden barracks. Hook went to look for his acquaintances, and I soon found my friend, Captain Lacy, by whom I was kindly received, and invited to stay and dine that evening at mess. I was naturally all curiosity to

hear something about Napoleon, of whom Lacy gave me some interesting details. Formerly he used to ride about a good deal, and they frequently saw him, but of late he had secluded himself almost entirely, and was hardly ever visible. He and his suite were at perpetual variance with the Governor, who found it impossible to please them, do what he would. General Gourgaud told Sir Hudson Lowe, before leaving the island, that if an angel from heaven had been sent there as Governor, they would not have been satisfied with him. "*Enfin,*" said he, "*il a été Empereur, il ne l'est plus, et voilà ce que c'est.*" He passed his time, for the most part, in dictating his memoirs, reading, and playing chess and billiards. He took exercise in rather an eccentric way, by means of a saddle fixed to the end of a moveable beam in his billiard-room, to the other end of which was attached a weight; and Bonaparte, mounting the saddle, moved himself up and down by touching the ground with his feet.

I asked Lacy, who was himself a chess player of much skill, if he could tell me anything about Napoleon's proficiency in the game. He replied that the Emperor was excessively partial to chess, and by no means an indifferent player. He disliked acting on the defensive, and when he got the attack into his hands would push it rapidly and with vigour, sacrificing Pawns and even pieces for the sake of a showy attack. This habit of play of course often involved him in difficulties, from which, how-

ever, he generally contrived to extricate himself, and come off victorious in the end. Count Bertrand, from whose conversation these particulars were gathered, Lacy had played with, and spoke of him as a strong, though very cautious player, and superior, he thought, to himself. The Count once showed him a little game which Napoleon had won of him. Lacy afterwards took it down from memory, and allowed me to have a copy of it. As it is very characteristic of the Emperor's peculiar style of play, I give it here :—

NAPOLEON.	BERTRAND.
1. P to K fourth	1. P to K fourth
2. Kt to K B third	2. Kt to Q B third
3. P to Q fourth	3. Kt takes P
4. Kt takes Kt	4. P takes Kt
5. K B to Q B fourth	5. K B to Q B fourth
6. P to Q B third	6. Q to K second
7. Castles	7. Q to K fourth
8. P to K B fourth	8. P takes P (dis. check)
9. K to R square	9. P takes P
10. B takes K B P (check)	10. K to Q square
11. P takes Q	11. P takes R (Queening)
12. B takes Kt	12. K B to K second
13. Q to Q Kt third	13. P to Q R fourth *

And Napoleon forces mate in five moves.

Lady Malcolm, the wife of Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm, played two games of chess with Napoleon

* This seems a courtier-like move on the part of Count Bertrand. He ought now to have taken P at K fifth with Q, having the exchange and two Pawns in return for a formidable attack.

in March, 1817, winning the first and losing the second. Lacy heard from Lady Malcolm that the great man at first appeared rather put out by his defeat, but immediately recovering his good humour began to replace the men for another game, with one of those fascinating smiles which he always had at his command when pleased. On rising from the table, he said to his fair opponent,—

"Miladi is fond of chess?"

Lady Malcolm replied that she was very fond of it, when he gallantly rejoined,—

"We all take pleasure in doing that which we know we can do well."

"From what you tell me," I said to Lacy, "I fear there is little chance of my getting a peep at Napoleon, which I was in hopes I should be able to do."

"I am afraid not," he replied; "but if any one can manage the business for you it is Captain Norris, the orderly officer, who is a great ally of mine; and, by good luck, here comes the very man."

As he spoke the door opened, and there entered an officer with extremely muddy boots, and an anxious, weary look.

"How are you, Norris?" said Lacy. "Allow me to make known to you my friend, Lieutenant Fitzsnob, of the Madras army, who is dying to have a look at the General. Can you help him to gratify his desire?"

Captain Norris bowed to me with a "very happy

to make your acquaintance, Mr. Fitzsnob,"—and then throwing himself into an arm-chair, said,—

"Faith, I tell you what it is, Lacy; I would give a trifle out of my own pocket if I could see him myself. You know it is part of my duty to look him up twice every day, and I give my word I haven't been able to set eyes on him for a fortnight. I have been walking and dodging about the Longwood House and grounds for eight hours this blessed day, trying in vain to get a sight of him. The fellow, sir, takes a pleasure in hiding himself from me, and has got small holes in his window curtains, to which he puts his spyglass, and can thus see without being seen. I met Bertrand just now, and told him that I have the Governor's positive orders to see General Bonaparte within twenty-four hours, and that, come what may, it *must* be done to-morrow; so the count was obliged to promise that he would contrive it somehow or other. The last time I saw him was by Bertrand's connivance, who told me to look in at the window of his bath-room one morning, when I saw him up to the neck in water, his countenance as white as that of a corpse, and attended by his valet, Marchand."

"Yours must be a very unpleasant kind of duty," I remarked to Captain Norris.

"There is no mistake about that," he answered, lighting a cheroot, and laughing. "One day, about a month ago, I asked Montholon if I could see

General Bonaparte. He assured me, with a mournful air, that the Emperor was ill in bed. He must have recovered pretty quickly, however; for not half-an hour afterwards I caught sight of him in the garden, in full fig—cocked hat, green coat, breeches, and silk stockings—leaning against a tree in converse with the Countess Bertrand, (who, by the way, is a very lively and agreeable person) and chaffing with her children."

"I suppose there is no hope for me, then," I said.

"I am not so sure of that," he replied; "at all events, meet me, if you can, at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, at Hutts Gate, and I will show you the Longwood grounds. You must come in uniform, mind, otherwise you won't be allowed to pass the guard."

I gladly accepted Captain Norris's kind offer, and promised to be punctual to time at the place he named.

As it was a public night at the 66th mess, there were present several strangers, besides Hook and myself, including the Marquis de Montchenu and Count Balmain, the French and Russian Commissioners, also Sir Thomas Reade, and Major Gorrequer, of the Governor's staff. The party was a very agreeable one, and I hardly ever remember to have enjoyed myself more. Friend Theodore was in high feather, and kept the risible muscles of those who had the good fortune to sit near him

on the continual stretch with his flashes of jest and wit. He delighted us all by exhibiting his incomparable talent for improvisation in a song, every verse of which contained a personal application to some one of the company present. A stanza on your humble servant I recollect ran thus,—

> "There's Lieutenant Fitzsnob,
> With a scar on his nob; *
> He's the King of Checkmaters, I guess:
> It is well known, begad,
> How, in Hyderabad,
> He floor'd all the natives at chess."

Early next morning I went off to the ship to get my uniform, having donned which, I mounted my poor jade of yesterday, and was at Hutts Gate by the appointed time. I found Captain Norris waiting for me, and as we were walking about the grounds, he told me that he had already seen Count Bertrand, who had requested him to be somewhere near Napoleon's bed-room window about eleven o'clock, and that he would endeavour to engage the Emperor at chess, placing him, if possible, in such a manner that the orderly officer might approach the window without attracting his notice.

* An allusion to the cicatrix of a wound on my forehead, inflicted at Seetabuldee by a Mahratta sowar. My swarthy friend was down upon me *en passant* with the cut "St. George," and had not his horse swerved at the moment of delivering his blow, so as to weaken its force, these Reminiscences would probably never have been penned.

"Lacy tells me that you are a chess-player, Mr. Fitzsnob," said Captain Norris. "He once tried to teach me the moves, but after one or two lessons, informed me that, in his opinion, my talents, though considerable, did not lie in that direction. To my thinking it's a desperate slow game, and not to be compared with whist. Lacy sometimes plays dummy games, one hand against the other, and in this way will muddle his head over a chess-board for hours together. It's the only fault he has."

"There," continued the Captain, "is the new house they are building for the General: it will be a handsome thing enough when finished, but I doubt much whether he will ever be persuaded to inhabit it."

We were now close to Longwood House, and while walking past a sort of wing that projected from the main part of the building, Captain Norris suddenly stopped, and taking hold of my arm said in a low whisper,—

"There he is! follow softly, close behind me."

I did so, and he sidled cautiously up towards a small latticed window, on either side of which Venetian shutters were turned back to the wall, one of the lattices being half open. Norris peeped warily in; I looked over his shoulder, and sure enough there was Napoleon playing chess with an upright soldierly-looking man, of about five-and-forty, in a military undress. I gazed on the great captive

almost breathlessly, and with a feeling of indescribable interest. He was attired in a white dressing-gown, not over clean, and had a red handkerchief tied round his head, the ends of which, fastened in front, were disposed so as to give them a fanciful resemblance to a laurel crown I had seen on one of his busts. The Emperor's face was turned to us, so that I could see his profile distinctly. His figure seemed to be enormously corpulent; his face bloated, and pallid even to ghastliness: his jaw large, deep and strongly set—an unfailing characteristic in those who possess great courage and force of will. I could not see his eyes, which were fixed on the chess-board, but his forehead was singularly massive and capacious —a fit "palace of the soul" for the mighty player

> "Whose game was empire, and whose stakes were thrones,
> Whose table earth, whose dice were human bones."

The floor was strewed with a litter of books and manuscripts; a marble bust of his son, the Duke of Reichstadt, was placed on a table near him; and almost opposite the window of the narrow apartment stood the small camp bed on which he always slept, and where he expired on the 5th May, 1821, his dying lips murmuring "*tête d'armée*," as the vexed spirit of the warrior fled from its earthly tenement, to mingle itself with an awful hurricane which on that day swept over the island, uprooting large trees, and shaking houses to their very foundations.

The two players appeared to be intently occupied with their game, and after they had exchanged some moves Napoleon exclaimed, in a tone of triumph,—

"*Bertrand, mon ami, enfin vous voilà attrapé!*"

"*Vraiment, Sire?*" replied the Grand Maréchal.

"*Oui, échec!*"

"*Encore échec!*"

"*Echec et mat!*"

"*C'est juste,*" remarked the Count, regarding the board with an air of some dissatisfaction; and he then added,—

"*Ah! Sire, vous êtes toujours vainqueur.*"

A pleased smile broke over Napoleon's face; he took a vehement pinch of snuff, and then leaning over, gently squeezed his follower's ear with his right hand. At this moment Bertrand's eye glanced towards the window, and seeing Norris, he made a hardly perceptible nod, on which the orderly officer instantly moved away, and we retreated out of sight as expeditiously as possible.

"That's well over," said my companion; "for to-day, at least, I shall have some peace, and not be kept on the tramp for hours, or obliged to hang about doors like a footman. Did you observe the chessmen he was playing with? They are a magnificent Chinese set of exquisitely carved ivory, marked with eagles, and the initial 'N,' surmounted by the imperial crown. They were sent here by the Hon. John Elphinstone, as a token of gratitude to Bonaparte for having

saved the life of his brother, Captain Elphinstone, of the 15th Light Dragoons, who was severely wounded and made prisoner the day before the battle of Waterloo. You sail for England to-morrow, do you? Come to my quarters, and have a sardine and a glass of sherry before you ride back to town. Wish I was going home with you," concluded the honest Captain, "for I am dead sick of this sort of work, and shall apply to be relieved before long."

My next visit to St. Helena occurred several years later, and Napoleon, "after life's fitful fever," was then sleeping tranquilly in the pleasant valley that sinks abruptly down from the left of the road, just before you turn off to Longwood. A pair of willow-trees flung their branches over his lonely grave, the turf around which was kept green by the waters of a beautiful little stream that bubbled cold and clear from the earth hard by. After lingering for some time about the spot I went on to Longwood, and there beheld a sight for the contemplative moralist. It was possible to approach the building only by going through a pig-sty; a threshing-machine occupied the bath-room, and the bed-room in which Napoleon breathed his last was now a stable. The pretty garden, in adorning which the Exile had whiled away many weary hours of his captivity, was all desolate, and the flowers and shrubs he loved to tend grubbed up to make way for a crop of potatoes.

Perhaps a passing notice of the character of

Napoleon, a man who, in his generation, towered so much above other men, "infinite in faculties," may be allowed even in these chess memoranda, to which it has properly no relation.

The modern Charlemagne has bequeathed to France the glory of his imperishable military renown, and also the more substantial legacy of the code that bears his name; but neither the splendour of his many victories, nor the profound acumen and knowledge of civil polity he displayed as a law-giver, can obscure the fact that, on the whole, he must be regarded as a scourge to his species. One cannot reflect on the unspeakable sufferings he brought on millions of his fellow-creatures; on his insatiable lust of power, which, for a long succession of years, deluged the plains of Europe, from Moscow to Cadiz, with torrents of human blood, without being forced to this conclusion. I never think of him but I recall to mind an anecdote of Nadir Shah, which may be found in the delightful pages of the Robertson of Eastern historians, Orme.* Nadir crossed the Indus in 1739, at the head of a large army, and desolated the provinces of Hindostan with fire and sword up to Delhi. In the very midst of his victorious career a dervish had the courage to present to him a paper, couched in the following terms:—"If thou art a god, act as a god! if thou art a prophet, conduct us in the way of salvation; if thou

* "History of India," Vol. I. p. 23.

art a king, render the people happy, and do not destroy them." To which the barbarian replied, "I am no god to act as a god, nor a prophet to show the way of salvation, nor a king to render the people happy; *but I am he whom God sends to the nations which He has determined to visit with His wrath.*"

MY MATCH AT CHESS WITH HERR SPRINGBOK.

Why does not some one write a stirring three-volume Chess novel? Of histories, disquisitions and learned treatises on the noble game there is no lack, and two of the last published of this kind, Professor Forbes's "History of Chess," and Mr. Fiske's "Book of the Chess Congress," is each admirable in its way, and deserving of the highest commendation. In the lighter department, again, the tales, essays, and poems of Messrs. G. Walker, Tomlinson and others leave little to be desired. To my thinking, "The Professor's Daughter," by the last named gentleman, is one of the most graceful little stories extant. But, I repeat, we want a good, bouncing, exciting three-decker fiction, begun, continued, and ended in chess. Of the raw material for such a work there is surely enough and to spare. A practised hand, possessing the requisite ability, would have little difficulty in culling from the records and annals of chess, scenes of incident and adventure, of pathos and humour, of virtue and its opposite, and the course of true love that never yet ran smooth in this best of all possible worlds—in obtaining, in short, from a repertory so

varied, an ample supply of the "mingled yarn of good and ill together," that makes up our common nature; which, coloured by a poetic imagination, and welded deftly and skilfully together, would form, I humbly conceive, a book of no ordinary interest. As for the tender passion, that indispensable adjunct of the romancer, why, the little rogue Cupid peeps slyly up at you from every square of the board. What glorious opportunities does the game afford for making way in the good graces of the dear creatures! There are few chess players, I will venture to assert, of even short standing, whose own experience will not enable them to assent at once to the truth of what I say.

I also, my friends, have had my little chess-born romances, and there are moments when my thoughts will escape from this weary, work-a-day world, and fly away to brood over the spring time of existence, when

> "Hope, enchanted, smiled and waved her golden hair."

Then the ghosts of buried memories come trooping around me, and there rises from the unforgotten past thy form, my lost Ianthe! whom, but for my devotion to chess, I never should have known. Woe is me!

> "The tomb received her charms
> In their perfection, with no trace of time
> Nor stain of sin upon them, only Death
> Had turned them pale."

Our hearts may be grey while the dark locks of youth still o'ershadow our foreheads, but amidst this desolation, if there be one spot intact by the blight that

has fallen elsewhere, that spot will be the recollection of a youthful love.

Being now somewhat overcome by my feelings, I put the end of my pen into my mouth, and, leaning my elbow on the table, fell a chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy, from which reverie I was awakened by a voice, exclaiming sharply, over my left shoulder, "What is all this nonsense you have been writing, Mr. Fitzsnob, and pray who was Ianthe, Sir?

MR. FITZ (*Shuffling up his MS. with a start*): Nobody, my dear, only a slight platonic.—

MRS. FITZ: Very platonic, I dare-say. I always thought you had some love entanglement before you married me. "Dark locks of youth," indeed! Why, you silly fellow, you are as grey as my chinchilla muff, and as bald as the ostrich egg in the dining room. I think it would be much more to your credit, Augustus, if, instead of wasting your time over stuff like that, you were to employ it in giving some useful instruction to your two sons, Gustavus Selenus, and Peter Carrera, who are at this moment quarrelling and fighting among my flower beds. I'm sure, I abominate that horrid chess, which only induces a neglect of all duties; indeed, I never could bear the sight of a chess board.

MR. FITZ (*Teneramente*): Nay, my love, don't say that; there was a time when you thought otherwise of my favourite pursuit. And I, can I ever forget that it is to chess I owe the happiness I now enjoy of calling you my own?

A short silence over head! Presently I felt an arm passed round the ostrich egg, on which two or three drops fell, and a light kiss was pressed; then a rustle, as of crinoline, and I was left alone.

CHOLERIC READER. *Quid hoc ad Iphycli boves?* What the deuce has all this snivelling prate to do with your chess match, Mr. Fitzsnob? The fact is you are sneaking about the bush, and afraid to give us the account of your well known overthrow, Mr. Fitzsnob. Had it been a match you had won, there would not have been a moment lost in beginning it, I warrant me.

MR. FITZ: Patience, worthy Sir, I am just coming to the match.

CHOLERIC READER: "As Tweed comes to Melrose, I think." Prithee, pull the string of thy shower-bath without more ado.

MR. FITZ: Here goes then!—

When I contested my famous match with the world-renowned Dutch professor, Mynheer Sigismond Cornelius Springbok, the British chess circles were on the tip-toe of expectation, anticipating, as they had a right to do, some of the finest play that ever was seen. My health was then but very indifferent, my biliary ducts being in bad working trim, and I laboured also under some remarkable symptoms, which my physician assured me could only proceed from a virulent disorder called "the hockogrocles." What of that! A Fitzsnob was never known to forfeit his word; I had given mine to play, and, come what might, was

resolved to go through with it. The match, as I have said, excited the greatest possible interest, which was not confined to the United Kingdom alone, but extended to every part of the Continent of Europe where chess was known and practised. The stake was one thousand pounds a side, the winner of the first eleven to be victor, and an incredible sum of money in bets depended on the event, the odds being almost invariably laid in my favour. It was, I should say, the most important match of chess that ever took place.

Springbok was very bumptious about winning, and gave out, as I was told, that he might die before the board, but would not be beaten. I myself, though full of my usual modest self confidence, and reliance on my own powers, felt, I know not wherefore, something of disquiet to shake and unsettle my nerves. Could it have been an unconscious anticipation of the terrible future that was thus casting its shade over my resolute spirit?

One of my chief backers and supporters in this momentous business was Major Frederick Gahagan, of the Madras Catamaran Native Infantry, an old friend and brother officer of mine, and a nephew, by the way, of the redoubtable Goliath O'Grady Gahagan, whose tremendous adventures have been so graphically described by the author of "Vanity Fair." When Gahagan commanded the Catamaran Grenadier company, I was his "ancient," and a very pleasant, jovial time we passed together in these respective

capacities. In garrison we inhabited one bungalow, dwelt in the same tent when in the field, rode each other's horses, drank each other's beer and brandy, smoked each other's cheroots, and were afflicted alike with impecuniosity and debts; that is to say, Fred, being a Captain, generally contrived to owe a great deal more money than I, a simple Standard Bearer, could presume to do. Gahagan was as fine a soldier as ever stepped in shoe leather, full of pluck, and happy as a school boy at the least scent of danger. He overtopped, by a couple of inches, the tallest man in his company, and had a breadth of shoulder, and powerful symmetry of limb, corresponding to his height. He was in one respect a very remarkable man, being the only person I ever heard of who actually had an account for the manufacture of his own coffin presented to him for payment. This circumstance, which I believe to be unique in the annals of mankind, is, nevertheless, strictly true. It is not my purpose, however, to do more than make mention of it here.

Major Gahagan had just arrived in England, on furlough, after an absence of twenty years, the whole of which time had been spent in hard military service under the late Honourable John Company, than whom, take him all in all, a better master or a better paymaster never existed. His long residence in the East, whither he had gone when quite a stripling, had tinged many of his ideas with Orientalism, and the daily habit of conversing with the natives

made it difficult for him to abandon altogether the use of their language, even after he had left their country. Not long after his return home I made a trip with him to Paris, and his French being something of the rustiest, whenever he found himself at a loss in conversation for a word, or even a sentence of that tongue, he would supply it from the Hindostani, to the no small bewilderment of his Gallic interlocutor.

Having not much to occupy his spare time, which hung rather weightily on his hands, the Major was pleased to interest himself vastly in the forthcoming match. As for chess itself, he knew as much about the game as the respectable Sphynx on the cover of this magazine; but having frequently seen me victorious against opponents in India, his faith in my prowess was unbounded; he believed me, in fact, to be invincible. Many were the visits made by him to my quarters in Jermyn-street, when he would discuss with enthusiam the great approaching fight, consuming weed after weed from a box of first chop "number two" Manillas, which I had purveyed for his especial behoof. He swore, by all the gods in the Hindoo Pantheon, that I must utterly smash "that thief of a Dutchman," as he irreverently designated my adversary, and declared that he would, with his own eyes, see every game played from beginning to end.

And he was as good as his word. Punctually each morning, while the contest lasted, Gahagan's tall, upright figure strode into the room before play commenced, when he would deliberately post himself

on my left hand, and silently watch the progress of the encounter with the gravity, and all the apparent interest of a veteran proficient; although, as before stated, he was as innocent of any knowledge of chess as the man in the moon. On one occasion only did he volunteer any active part in the proceedings. A sitting having been prolonged to a very late hour, it was proposed to adjourn it till the succeeding day, but a difference of opinion arose as to which combatant the move should remain with when we left off, a point of some importance, as the position of a game temporarily thus abandoned is always analysed by the players and their friends before the next meeting. There was a considerable clamour of tongues, and Springbok began to expatiate vehemently on the subject, in Dutch, to some of his compatriots who were present. After regarding the hubbub for some time with a puzzled air, Fred turned to me, and said, in Hindostani, "*Kya bolta hye woh burrawa?*"* "Oh!" answered I, "we can't quite decide which of us is to carry the move." "By the powers, then," cried this zealous adherent, thinking "the move" was something to be taken away bodily, and at the same time coming down on the board with his fist in a manner that caused all the pieces to fly into the air, "you shall have it, Fitz, my boy, if I carry it myself!"

As Springbok was known to be a genius of rather

* "What is he saying, that ——." I must really decline translating the Major's uncivil epithet; and I hereby request my friend Professor Forbes, should it meet his eye, by no means to divulge the meaning to a living soul.

a slippery cast, it was necessary to be very stringent in forming conditions, and some weeks were spent before definite arrangements could be effected. First, we, the principals, tried our hands at diplomacy, but this irregular course did not prove at all successful; indeed, it will be seen that the negotiation had assumed a personal sort of character when the valiant Mynheer wrote to me. "It is only over the chess board that I desire to engage myself against you." Our seconds then took the affair into their hands, which they ought to have done at first, and, after numerous meetings and a lengthy correspondence, the terms of battle were finally settled. On one point only, and that, as it turned out, a fatal one for me, was Springbok found to be wholly impracticable. There had been lately gaining ground amongst some chess players, a habit, especially in match games, of protracting the time of moving beyond all reasonable limit. I have absolutely seen a player take two hours to a move that did not require the consideration of as many minutes. In order, therefore, to guard against any misuse of time of this nature, should such be attempted, it was proposed to impose a pecuniary penalty on either player who should exceed thirty minutes on any one move. Springbok positively refused to accede to this condition, and declared that, if it were insisted on, the match would be off; so, in an unlucky hour, the point was conceded to him.

A suggestion of Fred Gahagan's, relative to the

above difficulty, was practical enough at all events. This bright idea, conceived, I am bound to say, by the gallant field officer, after sundry cheerers of whisky punch, was a stipulation that, if either combatant, on any occasion, took a palpably unreasonable time to play, it should be lawful to expedite him by the argument *a posteriori*, videlicet, by touching him up in the rear with a sword, penknife, or other pointed instrument. This method, Fred reminded me, had been used with singular good effect in the case of a lazy horsekeeper of his, Mootoosawmy by name, who was given to lagging behind on the line of march.

Preliminaries being now arranged, we at last sat face to face, I and the Dutch champion. The move fell to me, and I opened with a Bishop's gambit, which, without vanity, I think was handled by me in a way that would have elicited approbation from Jaenisch, the ablest analyser of that fine *début*. Long and fierce was the struggle, but my conquering spear at length pierced my enemy's armour of proof, and bore him to the ground. As, with a calm smile of triumph, I unsheathed my "dagger of mercy" to give him his *coup de grâce* (a profoundly conceived mate), I saw his fat, yellow countenance, through clouds of tobacco smoke, turn of a malachite green. He shot at me a glance of bitter enmity, and muttered something unintelligible, in his guttural native language. My friends were delighted, and said, in this great combat, Augustus Fitzsnob is even surpassing his old reputation, and more than justifying the expectations of his

countrymen. The elation of Fred Gahagan knew no bounds. He spent that evening in Jermyn-street, in the course of which he made huge inroads on the box of number twos, and nearly drove the breath out of my body by repeated whacks of joy on my spinal column.

I acquired a winning position early in the second *partie*, which I maintained until nearly the end, when, the game having lasted thirteen hours, exhausted by illness and fatigue, I threw away my advantage, and lost. In the third game it was the same thing, I made the most heroic efforts, and some magnificent play; but after being tied to my chair for twelve consecutive hours, tortured by spasms of "the hockogrocles," I was compelled to give in. You now begin to perceive the tactics of the abominable Springbok. This unprincipled foreigner, to whom, in my usual health, I could easily have given pawn and move—seeing clearly, from the result of the first game, that he was outplayed at every point, and could no more contend against me on even terms than he could bolt a door with a boiled carrot—resolved, I say, to take a base advantage of my feeble condition, *and win by outsitting me!* He effected his purpose but too well, as I did not score another game during the match, the final computation giving,

Springbok 11, Fitzsnob 1, Drawn 0.

Thus ended this memorable engagement, and thus on me, wretched, as Hamlet says, "a damned defeat

was made." Sing *pillalu!* and *ochone a rie!* The glory of Fitzsnob had departed,

> "Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn
> Robes in its golden beams,"

and the laurel of a hundred victories was snatched from his brow, in a moment, as it were, by a paltry pawn and move Dutchman of evil fortune. Gracious heaven! shall I ever forget the torments of shame and humiliation, the anguish that racked my soul, as I tossed on my sleepless couch through the watches of the long, long night that followed the black day of my disaster. *Wallah, billah, tallah!* I felt as if it would be indeed good for me then to die. I have experienced the pangs of despised love—I have been the possessor of a Calcutta lottery ticket, which I sold the day before the drawing, when it came up the great prize of a lack of rupees—yea, much dirt have I eaten in my pilgrimage through life, to say nothing that in my youth I suffered much extremity from sheriff's officers, and was once quodded by a *schelm* of a Madras tailor for a debt of fifteen hundred rupees, which I no more owed him than my grandmother did.* But all my previous misfortunes, I swear it, were tarts and cheesecakes compared with the ashes which the Springbokian catastrophe scattered on my head.

Into your sympathetic ear, kind reader, I have

* It was an obligation of the unsainted Frederick Gahagan's, for which I had become security.

whispered this account of my woes, but to the general public nothing of the sort was revealed. Many there are, who, in similar circumstances, would have sat upon their haunches, like the bear in Longfellow's poem, pitifully whining out the tale of their injuries to every passer by. So did not I; even as Cæsar, at the base of Pompey's pillar, covering my wounds with my mantle, I laid me down to die in majestic silence.

But others were not equally reticent. The press took up the story of my wrongs, and my friend, Mr. Boppery Bopp, who edits the chess column of the "Scorpion," gave Mynheer Springbok his deserts in good style. Boppery has a number of correspondents on the other side of the Styx, the shades of defunct amateurs, who still take an interest in mundane chess, and wrote to him from the Plutonian shore for news of my match. To some of these he replied, *Acheronta movebo, Minos, Habitans in Orco.* "The match between Mr. Fitzsnob and Mynheer Springbok, has, to the surprise of every one, terminated in favour of the Dutchman. The fact is, Mr. Fitzsnob was in a totally unfit state of health to undertake a contest of such importance; but, having promised to play, he chivalrously determined to keep faith at all risks. Even invalid as he was, he would unquestionably have won, had not his opponent resorted to the unworthy artifice of spinning out the time of every game, until, on more than one occasion, Mr. Fitzsnob, we are credibly informed, was carried from the board in a fainting condition. We should grossly fail in our duty did we omit to hold up

this discreditable manœuvre of the foreigner to public reprobation."

I will not attempt to describe the amazement and disgust of my *fidus Achates*, Fred Gahagan, at the melancholy issue of the fight. He could hardly persuade himself at first that I was indeed beaten, but having realized the disastrous fact, he swore great oaths in Hindostani, and made some pretty strong remarks to my victor on his dilatory strategy; to which the other snappishly replied that it was no business of his (Gahagan's), and that he considered him as little better than a meddling intruder. On hearing this, the good Major arose, and with wrathful visage, and distended beard, stretched an arm, capable of felling a bullock, towards tke collar of Springbok, who, rightly conceiving that something unpleasant was about to befall him, hopped over a table with the agility of the animal whose name he bore, and disappeared from our wondering sight in a twinkling. Fred burst into a roar of laughter, and called out, "Gad, Fitz, if I had caught hold of the *pidder soohkta*,* I'd have cracked him up like a flea.

Shortly after this untoward event, having a little recovered my health and spirits, I made a tour of visits to various provincial Chess clubs, and was every where received with the most flattering marks of sympathy and respect. Many dinners were given, at which toasts were proposed, and speeches made in my

* Son of a burnt father; a term of reproach used by Musselmans to Hindoos, who burn their dead.

honour. "Notwithstanding what has occurred," said the eloquent president of the Blatherum Chess Club, "our faith is still strong in our illustrious guest, Mr. Fitzsnob. He is the first chess player in England—he is the first chess player in Europe—and I question if the world has ever before seen such an accomplished master of our noble recreation."

It will scarcely be believed that Springbok had the effrontery to present himself at one of these festivities. This, however, was more than even my severely tried patience could stand; so, when dinner was over, I rose and uttered a few words of indignant scorn, which speedily made him slink from the room in dismay. The fellow soon afterwards left England, covered with deserved contempt, and will never, I fancy, venture to set foot in this island again.

A CURSORY CHAT UPON CHESS.

In these utilitarian times, when the practical would seem to have nearly altogether superseded the ideal; and when a thing, to enable it to take hold of the common mind, must contain at least some element of what is useful and instructive, as well as amusing, it says not a little, I conceive, in favour of chess, that of late years it has made such rapid and continued advances in public estimation. This is evidenced by the numerous and increasing societies for the promotion of this noblest and most intellectual of all games, which are now established throughout Great Britain and Ireland. There is scarcely a town of any note in the empire that does not possess its Chess Club; and for one that existed ten years ago at least a dozen flourish to-day.

The silly prejudice that chess is a mere recreation, and the acquisition of a knowledge of its principles and practice a waste of time, has been long rejected by every one capable of forming a judgment upon the matter; and it is now generally admitted to partake much more of the character of a science than that of a simple pastime. That employment surely cannot be wholly purposeless, which enables one to exercise and bring into play many of the qualities

requisite to a successful progress in the great game of life. Calculation, foresight, well-arranged and well-digested plans of action—the habit of never commencing an undertaking until the issue of it has been thoroughly considered — steadiness in prosperity, patience in difficulty—a strictly guarded temper; and last, though not least, courtesy and amenity of manner. All these are requisite to make a good chess player, and will the possession of them not do yeoman's service to any man, be his profession or calling what it may? To the objection, that chess is apt to engross time that ought to be devoted to more important objects, it may be answered, that abuse does not abrogate use: and that a habit of intoxication in one person is no reason why another who has more command over himself, should not be solaced with an occasional glass or two of wine.

A man's being a chess player is in some sort a guarantee that his other avocations are of an intellectual, as well as healthful nature; because in no pursuit more than this is the *mens sana in corpore sano* so indispensable for the attainment of even moderate excellence. A very trivial mental pre-occupation or disturbance is sufficient to mar the concentration of thought necessary to carry out the combinations of a game; and the fumes of even a casual indigestion, ascending to the brain, and thereby puddling the clear reason, Delilah-like, will shear a first-rate player of his strength, and cause him, for the time, to become weak as other men.

To no one is Horace's advice—

> "Æquam memento rebus in arduis
> Servare mentem,"

more applicable than to him who plays chess. When the fortune of war is adverse to him, he must sedulously thrust down to their element below all rising impatience and irritability; and, preserving an unruffled equanimity of mind and temper, steadily and warily watch for, and be ready to seize any opportunity the shifting turns of the game may afford him to retrieve his lost ground. Almost equally useful will he find the old Roman's admonition,

> "Sapienter idem
> Contrahes vento nimium secundo
> Turgida vela."

Many a winning position is broken up, and scattered in admired disorder, and the cup of victory snatched from the lips at the very moment of tasting, solely from the overweening confidence, and consequent carelessness, begotten by the flush of success.

The effect produced by chess play upon the moral and physical idiosyncracies of different individuals presents a curious, and not unamusing study to the observer. Some—but these are rare—when so engaged, preserve throughout a calm impenetrable exterior; and, whatever their inward sensations may be, exhibit outwardly, at least, neither exultation in victory, nor dejection or irritation when suffering defeat. Others, again, according to their temperaments,

display excitement in various ways. The brow corrugates into a fixed frown, or works rapidly up and down; the face and ears redden, the breath is drawn heavily, the hair is grasped and pulled, the fingers twitch about, the arms move restlessly, and the body sways to and fro, or changes uneasily from one posture to another; and in some nervous people the action of the heart is often violently accelerated, and severe headache produced. As the game proceeds, elevation or depression of spirits is sometimes manifested in the quaintest manner, by strange guttural sounds, exclamations, and quotations of all kinds: "Stupid hound!" "ass!" "blockhead!" are epithets a loser will not unfrequently lavish on himself; and I have known a friend of mine, who is a devoted worshipper of Caïssa, when he has made a bad move, or haply lost a game, stalk gravely to the fireplace, and returning with the poker in his hand, pathetically entreat his antagonist to punch him on the head with it.

There are some players who, in sooth, are very

> "Pipes for Fortune's finger,
> To sound what stop she please."

The gain of a slight advantage throws them into an ecstasy, and in imagination they have already given checkmate; a small reverse occurs to them, and, lo you! the thermometer of their hopes is at zero, and incontinently they become of gentlemen the most deject and wretched. Not a few there are who, though in ordinary circumstances, peradventure, they

may never betray any loss of temper, yet, when beaten at chess cannot refrain from giving open vent to their vexation and annoyance. A laughable instance of this is related of a member of a northern chess club, who, upon a certain occasion, having lost several games in succession to an opponent whom he considered inferior in strength to himself, suddenly left the club room without saying a word, but evidently in a state of intense exasperation. Coming into the street, he spied right opposite to him the back of an unsuspecting individual, who was stooping down in the act of tying his shoe. The splenetic and defeated chess player, totally unable to resist this opportunity of letting off some of his bottled-up wrath, without further question, straightway administered a hearty kick to the astounded shoe tyer, exclaiming angrily,—"Confound you! you are *always* tying that shoe!"

The chess-board is a mirror in which the broad features, and no less the minuter traits, that make up individual character, are distinctly and visibly shown. The sanguine temperament is marked by an eager, impetuous onset, often without plan or system, and by the adoption of attacking openings, in following out which a beaten track is disregarded, if a shorter path presents itself to view which may seem to lead to conquest. And thus, heedless of the military principle of maintaining an unbroken chain of communication with his base of operations, the ardent player rushes blindfold on; successful at times,

it is true, but, in most cases, hemmed in on all sides by the forces of his warier adversary, he is cut up and destroyed. The predominance of ideality in the character may be recognized by a fondness for novel and brilliant combinations. The game of this player seldom proceeds upon any fixed principle of action, because he is constantly tempted by a quick imagination to diverge from his original plan into some new mode of attack or defence, and wanders on through flowery, but deceitful bye-ways, after a tricksy sprite, which possibly at last lures him to his ruin. The matter-of-fact mind displays itself in a hard, wooden style of play. Its possessor indulges in no brilliant fancies or vagaries, but plods doggedly on his way, risking nothing, and content with the acquisition of small but sure advantages. He rejoices much in a *time* gained, and a pawn is unto him a pearl of great price. Beware, however, of despising him on this account, as he is frequently found a more dangerous adversary than the sparkling player, who is "of imagination all compact."

To make a really good chess player, it is absolutely necessary that all the faculties of the mind should be subservient to, and under the guidance of, a solid, tempered discretion. The undue preponderance of any one quality, whether it be a too vivid imagination, excitable temperament, or aught else that is incompatible with the strict exercise of sound judgment, will disqualify proportionately for the attainment of great excellence in the game.

An eminent chess player has mentioned to me, that when lately engaged in a long match of considerable importance, he felt his reasoning powers, at the termination of a hard day's struggle, comparatively fresh and vigorous; while his imagination, on the contrary, was invariably fagged and deadened. This is singular enough, as one would think that the reverse ought to have been the case. It is borne out, however, by an instance within my own knowledge, of an individual who was in the habit of writing a good deal of poetry, until a few years back, when he became an enthusiastic chess player. Since then he has occasionally attempted, but with no manner of success, to string verses; his poetical turn appearing either to be now in abeyance, or to have entirely forsaken him.

That ladies do not generally play chess well is owing, I think, not so much to a deficiency of intellectual capability for the game, but rather that the female *physique*, being more sensitive and easily excitable than that of the male, renders it more difficult for the fair sex to maintain that complete abstraction of mind and thought, without which it is impossible to reach anything above mediocrity over the chess-board. There is no rule, however, without its exception, and I have heard of lady chess players contending successfully upon even ground with the front-rank men of the St. George's Club. I may remark, in passing, that private, or drawing-room chess, in which it is customary to

touch pieces and pawns without playing them, to take back moves, and mutually to restore captured prisoners—a system that leads to a balance being struck at the end of the game, to settle which opponent has been most generous in sacrificing advantages to the other—differs as broadly and completely from the stern, uncompromising club game, as a holiday review in Hyde Park does from the battle of Waterloo.

It would, I imagine, even with a strong natural capacity for the pursuit, and granting that the memory were sufficiently tenacious, occupy some years of pretty severe study to become thoroughly master of all the different openings of the game of chess, with their complicated machinery of variations. Take a single one—say the Bishop's Gambit—and endeavour to trace it through all its involved and tortuous ramifications of attack and defence; you will have knitted your brows more than once before getting to the end of it, I can truly assure you. Reflect, then, that there are fifteen of these Gambits at present known,* together with a host of other openings, both regular and irregular, every one of which branches into a series of combinations perfectly distinct from its brethren, and I think it will be conceded that to acquire a

* The Evans, Lopez, Queen's, Queen's Counter, King's, King's Rook's Pawn's, King's Knight's, Allgaier, Muzio, Cochrane, Salvio, Cunningham, Bishop's, Damiano, and Greco Counter, Gambits.—*Vide* Mr. G. Walker's "Treatise on Chess."

really scientific knowledge of chess is no such light matter. If we consider again, that the results, at least of the major part of the above huge mass of combination and calculation, must be legibly written on the tablet of a first-rate player's brain, as an indispensable part of his mental resources, to be available for instant service in actual play, there will be no reason to wonder, I think, that great chess artists are so rarely to be met with.

It is foreign to the object of this desultory notice to inquire into the origin of the game of chess—a vexed question that has given rise to much learned research, and many ingenious hypotheses; and upon which Jones, Hyde, Barrington, Douce, Sir F. Madden, and others, have descanted scholarly and wisely, without, however, the attainment of any satisfactory result. The honour of the invention has been claimed for as many countries,* as aforetime there were cities† of Greece, each of which having peaceably allowed Homer to starve while he lived, at the decease of

"The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle,"

started up in fierce contention for the glory of having given him birth. But, in truth, the mists of antiquity and vague tradition, which rest so thickly over the birthplace and infancy of the royal

* The invention of chess has been, by turns, ascribed to China, India, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Assyria, and Greece.

† "Seven Grecian cities mourned for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

game, render it highly improbable that the obscurity in which the subject is now enveloped will ever be dissipated. Neither do I conceive it to be a matter of very paramount importance whether "the dark shall be light" regarding it or not; at least, for my single self, I fear I am ungrateful enough to derive a large quantum of pleasure from the incomparable pastime, without troubling my head as to what country or defunct personage I am indebted for the enjoyment.*

The feudal age appears to have been the high and palmy era of chess, which, with music, was then considered as indispensable to the formation of an accomplished knight, as skill in arms. In later times, the loftiest minds of their day, including kings, statesmen, and philosophers, have not disdained to resort to it as a relaxation from graver cares. The scroll of history, rich as it is in such instances, can exhibit no stronger or more eloquent moral to that sin by which "fell the angels," than the stern Corsican, bound to his desolate rock, and playing chess for the dear life, to stun the gnawings of his two devouring vultures—fallen pride and blasted ambition. The genius of chess is, moreover, essentially world-wide in its scope and operation, taking no account of religion, politics, or country. Mankind, from India to the far North, the swart Hindoo and the pale-faced Scandi-

* Since the above was written, the distinguished Oriental scholar, Professor D. Forbes, has finally settled this long-disputed point, by proving most satisfactorily that chess originated in India.—*Vide* his "History of Chess."

navian, alike practise it with the same keen relish and enthusiasm. Its resources, indeed, seem to be inexhaustible; custom cannot "stale their infinite variety." Like the kaleidoscope, it continually gives out fresh forms of changing beauty; the veteran amateur, who has grown grey in the exercise of its stratagems, experiencing as much interest in the pursuit as the novice who is acquainted with barely the moves.

An excellent friend of mine, himself no despicable proficient in the mystery, is in the habit of half-seriously maintaining that *luck* pervades chess as well as backgammon, or any other game in which chance predominates. Without going quite so far as this, I really am of opinion that the influence of the blind goddess is not altogether unfelt in playing chess. If it were practicable at the commencement of any game for one or both combatants to see through every possible variation of the opening adopted by them, from the first to the very last move, the affair would certainly then resolve itself into a matter of simple, unalloyed intellect. But this is obviously not in the nature of things, as no human brain could bear so great a weight of calculation. Skill in chess consists principally, if not wholly, in the faculty of being able to look forward *into* the game. If A. can see four moves in advance, and B. only three, then A. is a better player than B., in the ratio of four to three. The greatest chess master the world ever saw, could not, I presume, get beyond the tenth or eleventh move on a tolerably full board. In every

chess *partie*, then, there exists for each player a point, which is continually moving forward as the combat proceeds, and beyond which his power of calculation cannot go. If the opponents are of equal ability the two points will coincide; but, if there be a discrepancy in strength, one of the points will precede the other at a distance bearing an exact relation to the different skill of the players. Suppose the game now to have arrived at some one or other of these imaginary divisions, and that it becomes apparent to one of the contending parties that he can make an advantageous move, or series of moves. It is true that his science may enable him to do so; but as he did not *foresee* that this peculiar disposition of the pieces would bring about a certain result—*i.e.* give him the opportunity of exercising his ability in this particular manner—it follows, I think, that a leaven of chance will have mingled itself with, and assisted, his good play.

I have so frequently heard and known of a turn for chess being accompanied by a strong musical taste, that I am inclined to think there must be some intellectual connexion between the two arts, although it is certainly not very evident what characteristics chess and music possess in common. I have remarked, however, that chess players, in whom ideality is somewhat weak, are deficient also in the musical faculty.

There is a class of players, not commonly of a very high order of proficiency, who, when their game

is irretrievably lost, will still go on defending themselves in happy unconsciousness of the catastrophe that impends over their devoted heads. For them the coming event casts no shadow before; nothing but the actual *coup de grace*, in the shape of checkmate, can possibly enlighten them as to the fact of their being beaten. Their King, it may be, remains sole survivor of the fray against a Queen and other pieces; he has but two squares to go to, on one of which he is mated on the move, the other staving off annihilation for a move longer. After infinite serious deliberation the poor King is solemnly marched to the first-named square, when, *crac!* comes checkmate; whereupon our friends incontinently raise a lamentable outcry, bewailing in good set terms their stupidity in not having moved to the *other* square. After all, however, there may be bliss in this ignorance of the proximity of unavoidable evil; for what singeth good Sir John Suckling?—

> "Scire si liceret quæ debes subire,
> Et non subire, pulchrum est scire;
> Sed si subire debes, quæ debes scire,
> Quorsum vis scire, nam debes subire."

> "If man might know
> The ill he must undergo,
> And shun it so,
> Then it were good to know;
> But if he undergo it,
> Tho' he know it,
> What boots him know it?
> He must undergo it."

I hardly know anything more tantalising than the suspense that is undergone in the course of

an important *partie* while your adversary, yet undecided, is making up his mind respecting a move which you feel a dreadful conviction must exercise a disastrous influence upon your fortunes during the remainder of the game. You have long ago gone through the position, and are awaiting his decision with what stomach you may. The five minutes previous to the extraction of a molar tooth is a joke to what you are now obliged to endure. You fidget on your seat, look out of the window with an air of pretended indifference, or affect to address a careless observation to a looker-on, throwing the while furtive glances upon the field of action. Your opponent's digits wander towards a certain piece, and your heart beats furiously with apprehension; they are withdrawn from it, the quickened pulse moderates, and you breathe more freely again. His glance is directed to a different part of the board, and your lips involuntarily form themselves into the semblance of a whistle, as you lay the flattering unction to your soul that he is about to overlook what you see but only too well. Ah, confusion! his countenance suddenly lights up; he ogles that Black Knight with the eye of a rattlesnake; his hand is upon it—your fate is sealed—the midnight of despair falls upon your spirit, and the full bitterness of desolation is pictured in your woe-begone visage.

But, if losing at chess be like wormwood to swallow, on the other hand, what a soothing and delicious draught it is to win, especially if your antagonist

happens to be one against whom you are not ordinarily successful! A joy, to which few other joys are comparable, thrills through you, as, step by step, you build up an attack, before which you feel assured that your enemy's position, strongly fortified though it be, must ultimately give way. How gently and gingerly you handle the men! with what bland politeness you say "check!" your outward features puckered up in hypocritical composure; while your inner physiognomy chuckles all over with delight; and, finally, what a sensation of triumphant pleasure is yours, as you Queen a long-cherished Pawn, or obtain the crowning honour and glory of the finishing checkmate!

A great living authority on the subject is reported to have said,—"Whenever you meet with a chess player who tells you that he has never been beaten, offer him the Rook," meaning thereby, that an unconquered hero of this description, when properly tested, is not likely to turn out anything better than a Rook-player after all. Never beaten, indeed! Why, no amateur of any grade or denomination was ever worth his salt as a chess player, until he had undergone the previous purgatory of the thrashing mill, ay, and moreover, been pounded in it to his heart's content; this mental scourge being as requisite to the making of a strong player, as in good olden time, ere the schoolmaster went abroad, the veritable birchen twig was an inevitable necessity in the manufacture of a classical scholar. In fact, there is nothing regarding which a

man is more apt to deceive himself, or be deceived by others, than with respect to his proficiency in chess. There are, I am convinced, a great many comparatively mere dabblers in the game, each of whom believes himself, or is considered by the country circle over which he reigns supreme, to be second to no chess artist in Great Britain. We must be chary, therefore, in attaching much credit to any reputation, however greatly it may be magnified, that has not run the gauntlet either of the metropolitan, or chief provincial clubs: having once successfully passed through any of these ordeals, the aspirant may be fairly entitled to take rank as one of Caïssa's legitimate sons.

I remember hearing, a short time since, of a Philidor from the provinces, "who had never been beaten," walking one evening into a well known London chess resort, and challenging one of the *habitués* of the place to enter the lists with him. Poor fellow! he had unwittingly lighted upon one of the best chess-players in the metropolis, and could never have imagined, even in a vision, what was in store for him. His opponent commenced by beating him half a dozen successive even games in a hand canter; then gave him a Knight, and won several more, without his being able to score a single game; and upon his rather testily mentioning that he was "quite off his play" on that particular night, concluded by offering to give him the rook in a match for ten guineas, which was declined. The unlucky Philidor's rueful

and disconsolate aspect after the severe handling he had just undergone was a sight to behold. The agreeable delusion of his invincibility being thus suddenly destroyed, had evidently perplexed and bemused him in no common degree. He seemed like a man in a dream, as if desirous, with honest Abon Hassan in the Arabian tale, of asking some one to tweak his nose in order to satisfy himself of being really awake; and he sat gazing at his late antagonist with lack-lustre eye, and a Sir-Andrew-Aguecheek expression of countenance, as one ready to exclaim with that valorous knight,—"Plague on't, an I'd thought he'd been so cunning in fence, I'd have seen him damned ere I'd have challenged him."

I have before alluded to the chess that is commonly played in drawing-rooms as being altogether different from the ordinary "gravaminous" club game. It is, however, an exceedingly enjoyable thing to play a game of chess with an intelligent and agreeable lady opponent. It is pleasant to see the small white hand hovering undecidedly over the board, the wonted self-possessed manner touched for the nonce by a nervous flutter; while grave seriousness usurps the place of the playful smile that usually inhabits the delicate and expressive features. It gladdens one also to hear the merry laugh of triumph after a happy move; neither, I am afraid, is the pretty exclamation of helpless despair in difficulty at all ungrateful to the ear. But these are doubtless very distracting circumstances, which are apt to make strange havoc in the

calculations of the learned Theban of a gentleman; and though he may possibly succeed in winning his game despite of them, yet instances have occurred in which their influence has, nevertheless, led to his being extremely well mated in the long run.

And now Imagination, with extended pinion, sweeps far across the wide Atlantic, to the "still-vexed Bermoöthes," where, before a flower besprinkled island cell, Prospero is waving his magic wand. The entrance opens, and there sit Ferdinand and Miranda, playing at chess. Both are steeped to the lips in happiness, for scarce an hour has elapsed since the grave Prospero affianced them to each other in words of warning, yet strong approval. Miranda has just raised her innocent eyes from the table, and regards Milan's young heir with a gentle look of modesty and love, not unmixed with a little archness. Ferdinand's gaze is, in appearance, intently fixed on the chess board, but his mind's eye is plainly astray, for his two Bishops rest on squares of the same colour, and a moment since one of his Rooks performed a move after the saltatory fashion of the Knight. How tenderly she banters him!

> *Miranda.* Sweet lord, you play me false.
> *Ferdinand.* No, my dearest love,
> I would not for the world.
> *Miranda.* Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,
> And I would call it fair play.

Many of the readers of this "bald, unjointed chat," are doubtless acquainted with Retzsch's grand outline,

"Die Schachspieler," in which the Spirit of Evil is represented as playing at chess with Man for his soul. It is drawn with the same deep-thinking originality and force which characterise all the other productions of that unique genius, whose inimitable pencil has, with surpassing vigour, placed before us, in a few magic strokes, Faust and his Mentor-fiend in the midst of the fantastic horrors of the Brocken; and Macbeth in the witch's cave, spell-bound as he listens to those "secret, black, and midnight hags," with "supernatural solicitings," urging him irresistibly on to the fulfilment of his terrible destiny.

The chess-board, in this fine delineation, is placed upon the top of a sarcophagus, at which Man is seated, his head resting on his right hand. He is represented as a fair youth, with an open, thoughtful forehead, and long curling hair falling around his neck. Opposite to him sits towering the "archangel ruined," but with form that has *now* "lost all her original brightness." His figure is enveloped in a large mantle of many folds, from under which his claw-like hands protrude; his hair and beard are unkempt and in wild disorder; the cock's feather—traditional emblem of his race—waves above his head; and his deep and knotted brow is drawn down so as to overshadow his eyes, which glare from beneath it upon his human adversary with a scowl of triumphant and demoniacal malignity. In the back-ground, between the players, a mild ethereal being sorrowfully regards the critical state of the game. It is the Genius of Humanity.

He is half-turned away from his *protégé*, Man, and his outspreading wings seem to indicate that he is about to take flight to his native empyrean.

The pieces on either side are all symbolical. Satan's King is himself "the Prince of Darkness," muffled in a long cloak, and with the over-hanging cock's feather. His Queen is Pleasure, a voluptuous-looking female, with bosom uncovered, and extending the bowl of intoxication in her left hand. The Rooks, Knights, and Bishops on the fiend's side are represented by Pride, Falsehood, Anger, Indolence, Envy and Avarice conjoined, and Unbelief. The Pawns are Doubts fashioned like Harpies. For King, Man has his own Soul; his Queen is Religion holding the Cross; officers, Hope, Truth, Peace, Humility, Innocence, and Love; Pawns, winged Cherubim in the act of prayer. The game is going sore against Man. His capacity for prayer is already diminished by the loss of several Pawns; Innocence, Humility, and Love are wrested from him, and his infernal antagonist holds Peace, just captured, in his evil grasp. Ill-starred Humanity, we see, as yet has only vanquished Anger, and taken prisoner a solitary Doubt. Like stormy waves the malignant host of his enemy rolls vindictively onward, threatening to engulf him in destruction; but, unappalled by the hellish rabble, his Queen, Religion, with sublime and tranquil front, spreads the protecting ægis of her heavenly presence before the poor shrinking combatant, and with her support and guidance the victory may still be his. The whole allegory is intended; we

may suppose, to convey the impressive moral, that although man, in his frail career, may at times suffer bereavement of many of the virtues with which he has been endowed; yet, while his trust in the Divine strength and goodness remains unshaken and unimpaired, the powers of hell shall not be permitted to prevail against him, "to quench his immortality."

It has never yet been decided, and possibly never will be, whether the game of chess, as it now stands, is the aggregate production of various minds, and was built gradually up to its present entire and perfect whole; or whether it started full-grown into being, as some affirm, the unaided inspiration of one great inventive genius. The former supposition is most likely to be the true one, but I confess I would rather pin my faith, erroneous though it may be, upon the fond tradition that the goddess Caïssa, with her regal and knightly train of followers, like Minerva, sprang at one bound from the brain of her parent,—

"A pard-like Spirit, beautiful and swift."

CHESS CHIPS.

PART I.

In a little paper of mine, which was given to the chess world some time ago, I took occasion to remark the great progress that chess had lately made, and was still making, everywhere in this country. That observation is still more applicable at the present day than it was then. Chess clubs now flourish, well-nigh "thick as autumn leaves in Vallambrosa," from Land's End to John O'Groats. The *Illustrated News* wafts the subject into every *boudoir*, and in general society it is no uncommon thing to hear it discussed, and the names of eminent players mentioned, even by those who take comparatively little interest in the matter. As a consequence of all this, the absolute number of chess players has very much increased in all parts of the kingdom; and be it remembered, that I do not consider the designation, "chess player," by any means to apply to the individual who, mayhap knowing little more of the noble mystery than barely the moves, skittles his men about the board without plan or system of any kind. He alone is worthy of the name, who, after patient and careful study,

having mastered the chief openings, and made himself cognisant of the leading principles of the game, regards chess not as an idle and trivial pastime, but rather as a whetstone on which he may grind and sharpen the highest intellectual faculties of his mind. Moreover, if there be any truth in the ancient apophthegm—

"Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,"

then, indeed, chess must assume a higher position among the inventions that have benefited mankind than has yet been assigned to it; for where is there to be found a mental exercise in which instruction and amusement are more equally combined, the *utile* and *dulce* more pleasantly and harmoniously blended, than on the sixty-four squares of Caïssa's arena?

The page of history is rich in great names who were devoted to chess. The sagacious Franklin was a lover of it, and has deduced from it some wise maxims applicable to the practical uses of daily life. Frederick the Great, the keen-witted Voltaire, and Napoleon were enthusiasts in the game. It formed a chief solace to the captive Emperor in his lone exile, "afar amidst the melancholy main," at St. Helena. A strange and affecting sight it must have been to behold the giant intelligence—for the grasp of whose restless energies the wide world was all too narrow—thus cabined and confined: the mighty glories of Marengo and Austerlitz become to him even as the shadowy visions of a dream—the battle-field of his waking reality a toy of chequered ivory some two

feet square! Singularly enough, however, Napoleon never attained any considerable proficiency in chess —a first-rate player could have afforded him at any time, I believe, the odds of a Rook. But the chess-board of the redoubtable Corsican was the Continent of Europe. On that field he had long no equal. He moved Kings, Queens, and minor pieces, as he listed, without hindrance or let, until the Iron Duke bestowed on him the final check-mate of Waterloo.

One favourable peculiarity attending chess in the eyes of many is, that there exists no necessity to play skilfully, or even moderately well, in order to enjoy the pleasing mental excitement which it creates. This is so much the case, as almost to make it appear that a small proficiency in the art is compatible with more pleasure than a high amount of dexterity. When a player has either obtained, or conceives that he has obtained, a chess reputation, he not unfrequently affects a maid-like chariness of it; he stands much on punctilio, and the bare idea of losing a game to an equal or inferior, throws him into an agony, and causes his bowels to yearn with apprehension. Your indifferent player, on the contrary, has no such qualms or forebodings; with him, honest man, it is *cantabit vacuus* all the year round—no one can filch away his good name, and if now and then he happens by chance to win a game from a great gun, he chuckles with delight, and the desire of his heart is fulfilled. There was a foreign amateur, well known a year or two since in the London circles, who played

chess continually, and with the utmost ardour, at the invariable odds of Queen, three Pawns, and the move! An amusing illustration also of what I have just remarked was told to me by the late Mr. Daniels. Entering a room where a brace of chess acolytes were eagerly occupied with a game, and both playing as if their lives were staked on the issue, Mr. Daniels walked up to the table, and carelessly surveying the board inquired how they were getting on. "Oh! very well," said one of these sucking Philidors, looking up with a smile of wonderful self-complacency; "very well, indeed: but, you see, we've both lost our Kings!"

The chief practical deficiency in the common run of chess play is, I believe, the want of a good general view of the board—by which I mean the capacity to grapple, and constantly hold before the mind, the whole scope and action of any game you may be conducting. One of the great difficulties a novice has to contend with—and it is one which many never surmount—is, while following out a particular combination or train of play, steadily to remember its relation with, and inevitable bearing upon, the other parts of his game. Many there are who have acquired a competent knowledge of the openings and endings, but who, when launched upon the wide sea of the middle game, drift about bewildered, without rudder to guide, or compass to steer by. Others, again, combine their pieces with considerable readiness and accuracy, but when the working of Pawns is

in question, exhibit a melancholy falling off; while not a few, on the other hand, show more resource in manœuvring their Pawns or private soldiers, than in superintending the movements of the superior officers. Some possess the glance of a hawk for certain kinds of situations, and will run, perhaps, seven or eight moves deep into the variations of a troublesome and complex position; but this quickness of sight is limited to one spot, and they are consequently unable to bring the entire scheme and purpose of the game within the field of their vision. These last are generally good solvers of problems.

What, then, are the *desiderata* to constitute a really fine chess player?

The principal characteristic in the mental conformation of a Heydebrant or a Staunton is, I should say, *comprehensiveness*. "Looking before and after," his penetrating and sagacious eye surveys the board from Rook's Pawn to Rook's Pawn, embracing at once the broadest generalities, together with the most minute details. Intricate combinations, and crowded entangled positions—which would serve only to stupefy or hopelessly obfuscate the brain of a player of smaller calibre—evolve themselves before his understanding mind's eye, in distinct and lucid order. In the midst of an impetuous assault, which appears to occupy his entire attention, he suddenly marches a flank foot-soldier, who is far from that part of the action where the fight is warmest, one step to the front, as it would seem with no particular design;

yet, in the after part of the fray, when the pieces are cleared off the field, and the battle of the Pawns rageth hotly, that apparently harmless little advance of "Queen's Rook's Pawn to his sixth" is found to exercise an influence over the fortunes of the game, potent enough to turn the scale of victory in his favour. Mark the precision and steady regularity with which his forces are deployed upon the board, and the subtle caution with which his plan of attack is masked from the enemy, until the proper moment for its development shall arrive. Armed at all points, and prepared for every contingency, his game presents a solid, compact, and bristling front, through which his adversary seeks in vain to find a penetrable opening. When his designs are fully matured, and not one moment before, he begins his assault with vigour, and prosecutes it with relentless tenacity of purpose, allowing his hapless foe no respite, or even breathing time. While his opponent's pieces are huddled together—their action either greatly circumscribed, or altogether paralysed—his own appear as if gifted with ubiquity, ranging over the board whithersoever they list.* The attack is now concen-

* It is a common complaint with players, when pitted against an opponent stronger than themselves, that they "appear to have no pieces on the board." I have been often amused at seeing a worthy friend and brother chess player of mine, when his game has chanced to be bad, and his pieces in a dead fix, begin to abuse them fiercely, as if they possessed an independent volition, and had brought him into trouble of their own accord. "Look at that lumbering old villain of a Castle," he will perhaps say to a looker-on; "of what use is he to me?—never moved once; he might as well be off the board."

trated directly upon the hostile King, who opposes the flower of his army to the coming onslaught. Vainly he does so, for, in the words of Napier, describing the British charge at Albuera, "Nothing can stop that astonishing infantry," as well as cavalry. Gradually the beleaguered monarch's power of defence becomes contracted by the disablement and slaughter of his choicest troops, until at length he either surrenders at discretion, or a total rout ensues, and irrevocable checkmate closes the scene.

Chess players, as far as my experience goes, are for the most part good fellows: intelligent, well-informed, of liberal ideas, and willing to befriend one another as opportunity may serve, or necessity demand. There is a community of mind in it, that draws amateurs of this fascinating pursuit one to another, uniting and binding them together by links of perdurable toughness. I myself have formed over the chess board scores of pleasant acquaintances, and one or two friendships which I would not willingly allow to perish. And as these words flow from my pen, there rises from the mist of days long past, but still well remembered, the form of one now departed, on whose name I would fain linger for a brief moment, to offer a short tribute to his memory, even "in the frail pauses" of this idle and transitory writing. It was chess that first brought us together, and a congenial bent of mind, with sympathetic tastes, soon ripened the casual acquaintance into warm friendship. I see him now as of yore, his small

and finely chiselled features flushed with anxious solicitude, as he hangs over the chess-board pondering a difficult move. I hear him ardently descanting on some abstruse and knotty point of theology, or ethical philosophy, topics in the discussion of which his acute and logical mind ever took especial delight. I stand near him at the altar, and witness the brightest hope of his life consummated in his union with a youthful and most lovely bride. Within a fortnight of that day a disastrous accident hurried him to a premature grave, and cut short a career, in which his fine talents, professional skill, and unblemished honour, promised to attain for him the highest worldly distinction. Farewell, dear B——! Oftentimes in very sooth do I think,—

"Heu! quanto minus est cum reliquis versari, quam tui meminisse."

To give odds well is by no means a sure criterion of a chess player's real power. There is a certain knack in this variety of the established game, which some very fine players, possibly from want of practice, do not always acquire; while other third-rates, again, can sometimes render advantages which seem to be out of all proportion greater than their own absolute strength. An encounter at odds differs from an even contest, principally in this respect, that the superior player, in addition to ordinary contingencies, is compelled to guard against and parry, as best he may, the natural propensity of his adversary to simplify matters, and increase his own chance of winning,

by changing off the pieces as quickly as possible. I have heard this practice complained of as shabby, but surely without reason. The object of either player is to win the game by every legitimate means; if, therefore, you are unable to stave off exchanges, or obviate their effects, it is plain that you cannot afford the odds you have stipulated to give. It requires a quick tact, as well as a good acquaintance with your opponent's style of play, to enable you to calculate readily the kind of risks you may safely venture on, for I need hardly say, that when giving odds you must frequently play unsoundly, the very nature of your undertaking obliging you to do so. Should a really accomplished player (Mr. Buckle, for instance, who is as finished a master of this department of chess, as he is of the regular game*) be yielding heavy odds, and hard pressed by the numerical superiority of his opponent, consider it advisable to retreat for a while: adopting the tactics of the wary Fabius,—

"Qui nobis cunctando restituit rem,"

he falls back in grim and ominous silence, biding his time to make a sudden onslaught on any weak point which his practised eye may detect in his enemy's array. Be ready, therefore, at all points, friend Rook-player, ere you attempt to give the

* The author of "The History of Civilisation" has for some time past ceased to cultivate chess, in which pursuit, however, he deservedly ranks as one of the ablest amateurs in England.

coup de grace to the lion in his lair. It may be that you have encompassed the forest king with a network of iron; but take good heed, or, helpless and without resource as he appears, he may yet burst his toils and rend thee to pieces.

I have heard a ludicrous instance of the absorbing power exercised by chess over the mind, in producing a temporary oblivion of the laws, both of good manners, and personal cleanliness. The anecdote was told to me as perfectly authentic. It happened that two individuals were intently engaged over a game, one of whom had been prodigally gifted by nature with a nose of uncommon length and proportions. In the anxious examination of a difficult position in the *partie*, of which he had decidedly the worst, this gentleman, in no very placid mood, had thrust the upper part of his person forward, until his head, and especially his nasal organ, appeared to predominate over the major part of the board. While in this posture, his opponent remarked with dismay, that, evidently unnoticed by its preoccupied owner, there was agglomerated at the end of the prominent feature aforesaid, a huge pendicle or drop, which, without speedy abstertion, threatened to deposit itself amongst the pieces. He accordingly politely hinted this untoward state of matters to his absorbed and testy antagonist. The intimation, however, meeting with no attention, and the case being urgent, he somewhat peremptorily recommended him to blow his nose. "Blow it yourself," at length

growled the exasperated proprietor of the Slawkenbergian appendage; "I'm sure it's nearer you than it is to me!"

Gentle reader, if it seemeth good to you, let us look in for half an hour at the Grand Divan, in the Strand. This spacious and lofty saloon, resplendent with mirrors and gas, may be termed the very headquarters of metropolitan chess. Here amateurs of the game, of all ranks, from the peer to the shopkeeper, are wont to congregate, and meet as it were on common ground—social distinction for the time in abeyance, and the palm of superiority, by common consent, awarded to the strongest chess player. This evening several of the London chess celebrities are assembled here. Yonder sits a member of the Upper House, at play with the time worn veteran Alexandre, who, puffing his cigar, awaits his noble antagonist's next move, with a placid air of imperturbable serenity. Here, at this table, surrounded by spectators, is Harrwitz, giving the Rook to a young Guardsman, who has left his club in St. James's Street to revel awhile in the enjoyment of his favorite game. *Solvuntur risu tabulæ:* Harrwitz has this moment checkmated his military adversary, with a jest that has set the gallery on the broad grin. At the farther end of the room, near the fire-place, is a group of three persons, engaged in the examination of a position, perhaps the last move in the Amsterdam game. The centre one, with the large, expansive forehead, is Mr. Staunton, who,

you may remember, distinguished himself so much by winning the celebrated match of the great French player, M. St. Amant. The individual on Mr. Staunton's right, with the bluff, open expression of countenance, and hearty good-humoured smile, is Captain Evans, to whom chess players in all time will owe a debt of gratitude for the origination of the beautiful gambit which bears his name. The third of the party—that small, moustached man, with the animated and expressive physiognomy, who is gesticulating violently, and talking loudly to his companions—is Mr. Horwitz, than whom no one possesses a more brilliant and inventive genius for the game of chess; and, what is better than being a fine chess player, Mr. Horwitz, as every one who knows him will acknowledge, is a kind and warm-hearted man.

Simpson! mildest mannered of Ganymedes, we pray you of your courtesy to minister unto us a beaker of thy nectareous coffee.—A cigar, did you say? Alas! good Simpson, thou stick'st a dagger in us even to mention tobacco. Seldom now—and ever remorseful when we yield to temptation—are we wont to steep our senses in the bland Elysium of the delicious and care-absorbing herb of Nicot; so, away with that box of brown beauties from under our nostrils, thou varlet, or we shall do thee a mischief to a certainty.

* * * * * *

Forgive us, sweet Simpson, and be not wroth at

this little outbreak of a lacerated heart; for, as Charles Lamb, in his delectable "Farewell to Tobacco," sings,—

"'Twas but in a sort I blamed thee."

And, hark, in thine ear, Simpson; we will imitate Prince Hal's generosity, and give thee a thousand pounds—ask when thou wilt, and thou shall have it. No, not *now*, Simpson, but whenever the concerns of the "Bubble-and-Burst Extension" are finally wound up, and our deposit on two thousand shares therein returned to our collapsed pockets. In the mean time, prithee, bring hither "Vanity Fair;" we would fain solace ourselves for a short time with Becky Sharp, and the other humours of that excellent microcosm.

PART II.

"DANS *le métier de la guerre le jeu est toujours à celui qui fait le moins de fautes.*" This pithy opinion of Napoleon the Great, regarding the art in which he himself was so renowned a proficient, is exactly applicable to the mimic war of the exchequer. The player who makes the fewest mistakes will invariably win the game. There is so much resemblance between military strategy, and chess manœuvring, that it has been a matter of surprise how Napoleon, mighty as he was "in the brave squares of war," should have exhibited such very indifferent prowess on the squares of chess; of which game, it must be remembered, he was a keen amateur, and practised it all his life. An attempt to ascertain the cause of this may not, perhaps, be without interest to amateurs of our noble game.

In former times, chess was held in such repute by military commanders, that a martial education was generally supposed to be incomplete without a knowledge of its tactics; and it cannot be denied that there is a close theoretical analogy between the arts of war and chess, although in practice important discrepancies exist, which considerably impair the accuracy of the parallel. The great warrior and the first-rate chess player undoubtedly have many mental

characteristics in common. Both must be clear-sighted and far-sighted, with a microscopic vision for details. Indomitable perseverance and vigilant caution must go hand-in-hand with either of them. With power to mask their own designs behind an impenetrable veil, they must possess sagacity to fathom the deepest laid plots of their adversary, together with astuteness to detect and baffle his every stratagem. Uniting promptitude of discernment, with unflinching vigour to strike at the proper moment, they must be able to combine and calculate upon principles both solid and profound. And here I think the chess player has the advantage, inasmuch as he has no external impediment to fear in working out his well-digested plans, whereas a variety of circumstances, which no exercise of foresight can provide against, may interfere to mar the best contrived schemes of the general. There are some qualities, however, which the chess player may or may not possess, that are, nevertheless, of vital importance to the military chief. The latter, for instance, must have an acute perception of character, that he may be able (amongst other things) to make a correct choice of subordinates, on whose intelligence and zeal he can implicitly rely for the exact and punctual execution of his orders. His own mind must be cast in that mould of high command, which enables its possessor, by its predominating force, to control and wield, in unhesitating obedience to his will, and manageable as a steam machine, large

masses of disciplined men, while he at the same time inspires his troops with that enthusiastic and unbounded confidence in him as their leader, without which he can hope to achieve no great or striking success. Lastly, he must have the capacity to preserve his judgment and presence of mind unimpaired in all emergencies; for it need hardly be remarked, that there is some difference between devising a chess combination in undisturbed security by a sea-coal fire in a snug apartment, and directing the movements of an army with coolness and precision amidst the smoke, whistle of bullets, and confused turmoil of a heady fight.

Admitting, however, the foregoing observations to be well founded, they only demonstrate that the general ought to surpass the chess player in the range of his mental faculties; and it still, therefore, remains to be shown why Napoleon, having a decided bias for the game, was so inferior as a chess tactician. The reason I take to be simply this. Even a superficial examination of the record of his campaigns, would, I think, be sufficient to satisfy any one, that throughout the whole of his career, the great soldier in question, in violation of all received maxims of military strategy, was accustomed to incur the most desperate risks, which would probably have involved any other commander than himself in ruin; trusting for extrication to his own daring and inventive genius, and the incapacity of his adversaries, which, in conjunction with his "destiny," for a long time

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never failed to rescue him, not only unscathed, but triumphantly victorious. It was not, however, in the nature of things that this could endure always, and accordingly the time arrived when the pitcher must needs be broken at last. Fortune deserted him, though his warlike genius never did. His enemies learned to beat him at his own weapons, and then befell the catastrophe of Waterloo, and the closing scene at St. Helena.

Describing his campaigns in chess parlance, it might be said that Napoleon, with magnificent talent for the game, was nevertheless, an unsound player; prone to make brilliant but perilous sacrifices, and to get involved in ruinously bad positions, on the faith of his own superior play, and his opponent's weakness. Now we all know that this kind of chess play is both common enough, and that those to whom it is habitual, are very unsusceptible of improvement; and if I am right in the conjecture I have hazarded, that such was the style of Napoleon's game, it may in some sort account for his never having risen above mediocrity over the chess-board.

I never heard that the Duke of Wellington, at any time of his life, sought relaxation in chess from his weightier employments, yet had that illustrious warrior and statesman ever found inclination or leisure for a pursuit so trivial in comparison with his other high avocations, I cannot doubt that he would have mastered it as completely as he did every other work which he undertook. For, be it observed, the

attribute of rashness which I have instanced as being part of Napoleon's idiosyncracy, was altogether foreign to the steady equipoise of his great antagonist's character. It is in the nature of military operations that they cannot, generally speaking, be conducted without leaving something, and occasionally a good deal, to contingency. But the system on which the modern Fabius acted, was ever to avoid unnecessary hazard, and to commence no undertaking in which he did not see distinctly a reasonable prospect of success. Rather than endanger the accomplishment of his object by unwise precipitation, he would retreat hundreds of miles, and wait patiently for months, until opportunity was ripe for delivering an irresistible and crushing blow on his adversary. I consider, then, there is just ground for thinking that the element of wary cautiousness in the great Duke's nature, combined with the other chess qualifications, with which, reasoning from analogy, he must have been abundantly gifted, might have rendered him, had he so willed it, pre-eminent on the battle-field of chess.

The question has often occured to me, and I doubt not to others also, how well is chess played? I mean, what is the disparity between the force of the ablest player ever known, and the mathematical perfection of which the science of chess is undoubtedly susceptible? To what the inequality may amount it would be difficult, if not impossible, to say, but it must be something very considerable. In reference to this,

I once heard it remarked by a very fine chess player —now no more—that, in his opinion, "the board," *i.e.* the resources of the game, could, in the long run, afford the odds of a Knight to the strongest player in the world; and if it be considered what an enormous advantage it must be, never by any chance either to stumble or slip down, but always to make the best possible move in every circumstance of the game, these odds must be taken, I imagine, as under, rather than over, the mark. We may in some degree realise the great superiority which a perfect foreknowledge imparts, by first thoroughly analysing a complex and difficult position, and then contesting it against a much stronger player than ourselves, to whom it is new. The analysis previously made, there is little doubt, would give us the temporary mastery over our master.

Tom Moore, the poet, mentions in his diary, as a very strong objection of Bishop Warburton's to mathematical pursuits, "that in making a man conversant with studies in which *certainty* is the result, they unfit him (or at least do not prepare him) for sifting and balancing (what alone he will have to do in the world) *probabilities;* there being no worse practical men than those who require more evidence than is necessary."

Now that circumstance, which so grave an authority as Warburton pronounces to be an inherent defect in mathematics, as regards practical mental training, is precisely reversed in chess, and constitutes, therefore,

the principal value of the game as a mental exercise and preparative for the contentions of actual life. In the study of mathematics, there is always an inevitable result, to be reached by a fixed and consecutive train of reasoning which admits of no deviation. In chess, on the other hand, although the result, *i.e.* the winning or drawing of the game, is inevitable, yet the ways of accomplishing it are almost infinite; and the mode of reasoning—save in the openings and many of the endings, which can be acquired from the books—consists in a perpetual sifting and balancing of probabilities. It is true, as I have already noticed, that chess in its nature admits of the same determinate certainty as mathematics, but as it is also true that absolute perfection of play is possible only by the exercise of a degree of prescience, and a depth of skill both in combination and calculation, of which the most happily organised brain must ever fall immeasurably short, this perfection, as far as concerns us, cannot be said to have any existence.

Hazlitt, in his well-known "Table Talk," makes some strictures on chess, remarkable only for their entire misapprehension of the subject. He says:—

"It requires a good capacity to play well at chess, but, after all, it is a game of skill, and not of genius. Know what you will of it, the understanding still moves in certain tracks in which others have trod before it, quicker or slower, with more or less comprehension and presence of mind. The greatest skill strikes out nothing for itself from its own

peculiar resources; the nature of the game is a thing determinate and fixed: there is no royal or poetical road made to checkmate your adversary."

These remarks from the pen of an acute reasoner like Hazlitt are worth considering, because they form a notable instance of the fallacious conclusions to which, doubtless, a slight or imperfect knowledge of chess must have conducted the subtle and discriminating mind of that accomplished critic, who probably knew just enough of the game royal to be deceived as to its real nature. Before pronouncing such a judgment, however, he ought to have remembered the danger of a little knowledge, and either have drunk deep, or tasted not the Caïssan spring.

It is not difficult for any one at all conversant with the subject to perceive that the root of Hazlitt's error (for an error he certainly has committed in this matter) is to be found in the assertion that "the nature of the game is a thing determinate and fixed;" and to this great mistake the entirely false estimate he has formed of chess may accordingly be traced. That chess is *theoretically* capable of mathematical certainty is not to be denied; but so far from believing that such certainty is attainable in practice by any human effort, I do not hesitate to state my conviction, that if it were possible for the intellectual resources of Shakespeare, Bacon, Newton, and Locke, to be fused into one whole, and supposing the mighty energy thus acquired to be unremittingly directed for a life-time to the object of obtaining a

determinate certainty in chess, the result would be signal failure. This will at once be evident if we consider, not so much the number of openings in chess, as the inexhaustible variations into which each opening branches — variations so multiform and endlessly ramified, that even to think of giving them permanent lodgment in the brain is enough to create hopeless bewilderment. But to render chess "determinate and fixed" in actual play, would necessitate a thorough knowledge of every variation of which each opening is susceptible, from the beginning to the end of the game—a thing as impossible to accomplish as would be an attempt to number the waves of the ocean, or count the sands on the sea shore.

Nothing can be more contrary to fact than to say of chess that, "know what you will of it, the understanding still moves in certain tracks, in which others have gone before it." True it is that chess authors and analysts have, with infinite labour and ingenuity, partially elicited something like mechanical routine for the beginnings and endings of games—pebbles of knowledge, as it were, picked up on either shore—but for the Atlantic of the middle game, neither track, chart, nor compass have ever yet been devised. The player must plunge into it alone, and trust for victory to his own courage and skill, for nought else will avail him. Again, to pronounce chess not to be a game of genius, and that "the greatest skill strikes out nothing new for itself from its own peculiar resources," is simply nonsense.

The chess-board affords unfettered scope and action for most of the reflective, imaginative, and perceptive powers of the mind; and wherein, I ask, does what is called genius consist, but in the capacity to throw off rare and beautiful forms of thought, by the separate or conjoined exercise of these faculties? Chess is, therefore, not only a game of inventive genius, but it possesses an adaptation for the display of the *mens divinior* scarcely inferior to that of any other mental occupation.

In another part of his "Table Talk," Hazlitt says:—"A great chess player is not a great man, for he leaves the world as he found it; no act terminating in itself constitutes greatness." This is a sound and true remark, which it would be well to keep before the mind in the present day, when enthusiasm for chess prevails to a considerable extent, and more cultivation is bestowed on the game generally than at any previous period. A great chess player who dies and leaves behind him no distinguishing sign, either public or private, but that of chess, is very far from deserving the appellation of a great man, in respect that he must have allowed to run comparatively to waste, talents and capabilities which might have been turned to useful account for the benefit of his species. I believe the proper way to employ chess, to repeat an opinion already expressed in these pages, is to make it "a whetstone on which to grind and sharpen the higher faculties of the mind." Used thus, and resolutely kept sub-

servient to the substantial pursuits of life, chess cannot fail, I think, to render yeoman's service to any man.

Charles Lamb expresses his opinion of chess in his usual quaint manner, employing, as his mouthpiece, the exemplary Mrs. Battle, of whist playing memory, who descants on it in the following contemptuous fashion:—

"She could not conceive a game wanting the sprightly infusion of chance—the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people, playing at chess in a corner of the room, while whist was stirring in the centre, would inspire her with insufferable horror and ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of castles and knights, she would argue (and, I think, in this case justly), were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard-headed contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and colour. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants." Had Lamb been well acquainted with chess he could scarcely have written of it in this manner, for he would have known that, bridled of course by sound judgment, a quick imagination to assist him in originating and carrying out combinations, is a most essential adjunct to the chess player; for the reason that the games of those players in whom ideality is weak, or altogether deficient, are, for the most part, barren in interest, and of inferior merit. But, truly, I can conceive nothing so little akin to the inclinations of the

volatile Elia, as the study of a pursuit like chess. The restless and vivacious intellect of that charming writer seemed ever averse to carry out a continuous process of thought, delighting rather to exhibit its strength in broken and erratic gambols. Like Leigh Hunt's escaped pig, it was never so much in its element as when "running up all manner of streets" to hunt after some stray quillet or quiddity, which, when caught, was straightway cut and polished by the keen, scintillating genius of its captor, and then set to sparkle for all time, in the gold of an Elian essay.

Shakespeare, I suspect, must have been wholly ignorant of chess. Had he possessed any knowledge of it, however slight, the close analogy which even superficial observation must detect between its vicissitudes, and the ever-shifting phases of human life, could hardly have escaped the piercing ken of that glorious intelligence, "at whose feet," to use Schlegel's expression, "the world of spirits and nature have laid all their treasures." In that case his writings, I cannot but think, would have borne frequent testimony to his knowledge of the royal game, in the shape of simile and illustration; but in all his works, I know of but the solitary allusion to chess, which, I have before quoted.*

Walter Scott, in his boyhood and early youth, was an ardent devotee of chess, the favourite recreation of the Knights and Paladins in whose adventures

* Page 83.

and deeds of *derring do*, his young imagination already revelled with delight. On one occasion, we are told by his biographer, Lockhart, when laid up by a lingering malady, he used to play chess daily for hours with a schoolfellow, the windows of his bedroom being kept open in very cold weather, as a part of the medical treatment. He was also in the habit of indulging furtively in chess, in his father's office, with one of his fellow-clerks, the board being often precipitately hid away by the two delinquents, when the paternal footstep was heard approaching the room. Scott himself mentions that, when out on youthful exploring expeditions, in visiting places of historical interest, chess still occupied his thoughts. "Wherever I went," he says, "I cut a piece of a branch from a tree; these constituted what I called my log-book, and I intended to have had a set of chessmen out of them, each having reference to the place where it was cut: as, the Kings from Falkland and Holyrood; the Queens from Queen Mary's yew-tree at Crookston; the Bishops from abbeys, or episcopal places; the Knights from baronial residences; the Rooks from royal fortresses; and the Pawns, generally, from places worthy of historical note. But this whimsical design I never carried out." Sir Walter, however, in his manhood, renounced his allegiance to chess, and gave up its pursuit altogether, on the ground that it was improper to throw away upon a mere game, however ingenious, the time that would suffice for the acquisition of a new language.

"Surely," he then said, "chess-playing is a sad waste of brain."

The assertion of the celebrated French chess-master, Deschapelles, that "every man organised for chess ought in a few days to become a first-rate player; and that three sittings were all he himself required to learn the march of the game, defend himself, and beat the strongest players," is a piece of arrant *bavardage*, which has obtained currency only from the great reputation of its utterer; who, however, was well known to have been fond of creating astonishment, and amusing himself at the expense of the credulity of strangers, by putting forth paradoxes and startling asseverations. The absurdity is hardly worth refuting; but if the first part of it were true, this country alone could produce a regiment of first-rate chess players, whereas it is well known there do not exist half-a-dozen of that calibre in the world. And if the latter part is to be credited, we must also believe Deschapelles himself to have been endowed with a brain such as was never before enclosed in a human skull; and forming a single exception to the psychological law, which decrees that excellence in any pursuit, no matter of what nature, shall be the fruit of long-sustained labour alone. But the great French player was as sublime in his self-esteem as the first Napoleon, of whose estimation of himself the following anecdote is an amusing illustration. When the Duke of Bassano informed him at the time when, previous to the campaign of Moscow, he had

resolved to restore ancient Poland, and consequently to induce or compel Austria to accept the Illyrian provinces for Gallicia, that Metternich objected to the proposed exchange, on account of its inequality,—"*Quoi!*" cried the Emperor; "*le plaisant homme! il veut faire le diplomate avec moi. C'est une foiblesse de l'esprit humain de croire qu'on peut lutter contre moi.*"

To play chess with your wife is said to be an unwise and dangerous experiment. It is narrated of one Ferrand, count of Flanders, that he was in the habit of chessing with the partner of his existence, and was invariably beaten by her; to the detriment of his marital supremacy and dignity. This state of things produced family jars, which ended at last in a mutual bitter hatred. It fell out that the Count was taken prisoner at the battle of Bovines; the Countess, as the story goes, could easily have procured his release, but the obdurate votaress of Caïssa allowed her captive yoke-fellow to remain in durance vile for several years before she was persuaded to have him set at liberty.

There is another traditionary anecdote, the heroine of which is a noble Eastern lady, whose husband, after having lost all his available property at chess, in the last desperate hope of retrieving his fortunes, staked her, his favourite wife, against a large sum of money. From an adjoining lattice, the fair one, who, as it appears, was also a chess player, watched the progress of the game on which her fate depended, as may be supposed, with anxious

solicitude. The miserable husband seemed about to be beaten, when a female voice was suddenly heard from above, adjuring him, in agonised tones, "to sacrifice his Castle, and save his wife."* The incident has been done into very sufficient rhyme, of which these are the concluding verses:—

"Now he maddens as the lion
  Raging through the desert grove;
Now with desperate hope he pledges
  Zaida's beauties, Zaida's love.

Mehmed Bey the offer seizes,
  Triumph glistens in his eyes;
Ah! rash youth, that thou hadst never
  Dar'd to risk so fair a prize!

For impending ruin threatens
  To devote thy hapless love.
But what piercing accents issue
  From the latticed height above?

'Tis the beauteous Zaida, crying,
  Half distracted, 'Oh! my life!
To the foe concede thy Castle,
  And from death preserve thy wife!'"

The virulence of the *odium theologicum* has long since passed into proverb, and it would appear that

* The following is said to have been the situation of the game when the lady interposed her assistance:—

White. K. at his R. 4; R. at Q. R. 2; B. at K. 4; Pawns at Q. Kt. 6: and Q. B. 6.

Black. K. at Q. Kt. square; Rooks at K. Kt. square; and Q. Kt. 7; Q. at K. Kt. 2.

White to play.

the *odium scaccicum* almost rivals it in bitterness and intensity. The old romances contain frequent accounts of terrible disputes about chess, and when the turbulent passions of the fierce Paladins of those days were fairly let loose, it was no uncommon circumstance for the Guerin de Montglaves, Ivonnets, and Duke Richards, to pommel each other without stint or mercy, and interchange bloody coxcombs with the ponderous chess pieces then in vogue, by way of settling their differences; after which, for aught we know to the contrary, those worthy personages may have shaken hands, and become friends again. But in modern times, chess feuds seem to be never ending, still beginning. The weapons of the rivals for supremacy are principally steel pens, which are wielded to the abundant shedding of ink, while the partisans on either side make the welkin resound with cries of "Bombastes Furioso to the rescue!" "Advance banners, boys, in the name of the gallant Fusbos!"

The vexed question, respecting the birth-place of chess has been lately revived in a *brochure* from the pen of Mr. Bland, which is a reprint of a paper by that gentleman in the thirteenth volume of the Royal Asiatic Society's "Quarterly Journal." In this essay, which contains much learned research, as well as a great deal of new and agreeable information relative to Eastern chess, Mr. Bland attempts to establish that the "Great Chess," commonly called that of Timur, was the original form of the game;

that it was transplanted from Persia to India; from whence, after having undergone great alterations, it was again taken to Persia, in its present shape, in the sixth century. This hypothesis, however, which rests upon the unsupported authority of a single old Persian MS., has been shown to be altogether untenable, in an ingenious and humorous notice (in which, I believe, I can discern the critical truncheon of a distinguished Orientalist friend) of Mr. Bland's pamphlet, which appeared last year in the pages of a well known chess periodical.

Ahmed Ibn Arabshah, the Syrian biographer of Timur, says that the mind of that sublime lord of the East "was too exalted to play at the Little Chess (*Shatranj al Saghir*), and therefore he played at the Great Chess (*Shatranj al Kebir*)," which, indeed, is said to have been his own invention. For the information of those who may be unacquainted with this "Great" or "Complete Chess," as it is also called, I will quote a passage or two from Mr. Bland's description of it:—

"The Complete Chess is played with fifty-six pieces, on a board of one hundred and ten squares, in ten rows of eleven each, with two additional squares, making in all one hundred and twelve. * * * Of the fifty-six pieces, there are eleven different denominations. Each side has twenty-eight men—viz. a King, Wazir, Ferzin, two Zarafahs, two Dabbabahs, two Taliahs, two Horses, two Elephants, two Camels, two Rukhs, and eleven Pawns." As the

powers of some of these pieces are similar to those of our own time, and the others are only modifications of them, they need not now be particularised. There is one man, however, called "Original Pawn," which deserves especial notice, as the peculiarity of its movements must have enormously added to the complication of the game. This Pawn, it is stated, "on reaching the extremity of the board, does not immediately become a Queen, nor does it assume the nature and functions of any other piece, but continues to be a Pawn, being permitted once in the game to be moved to any square on the board where it may be placed to the greatest advantage, and do the most injury to the adversary, by attacking two pieces at once; and it would appear, that if there be a piece on the square it desires to occupy, that piece may be removed, and the privileged Pawn placed there. It then continues to move and take like a Pawn, and when it again arrives at the further extremity, it is again allowable to do with it as before, and it is then called King's Pawn. Should it once more reach the end, it is called Shahi Masnuâ, and moves as a King."

I have always entertained a profound respect for the magnificent Timur. His "Political and Military Institutes" have an honoured place amongst my small collection of books; and, irrespective of his fame as an illustrious warrior, they prove their author to have possessed an enlightened, just, and liberal mind, far in advance, at all events, of the barbarians

whom he subjugated and ruled over. But, beard of the Prophet! my veneration for him is increased tenfold when I think of his inventing and playing this portentous "Great Chess." *Alhumd-illilah tallah!* my head goes round, and I perspire coldly at the very mention of the Zarafahs, Dabbabahs, Taliahs, &c. The bare thought of that fearful Original Pawn turns my liver into water, and, placing the finger of humility on the lip of astonishment, I am made to feel myself truly less than a dog, in comparison with the conqueror of Bajazet.

PART III.

"THE bones in my division," said Lannes, remarking on the desperate nature of the contest at the battle of Montebello, "cracked like a glass in a hailstorm." I trust this saying of the valiant Marshal will be (metaphorically only) realised at the approaching Chess Tournament;* and that the list may be strewed with fractured bones; for, without hard and severe fighting, it is very certain that one of the principal objects of the undertaking—the production of fine games—cannot be accomplished.

There can be little doubt, I fancy, that all the finest chess players of the day, who can possibly find opportunity to attend, will be attracted by this tourney. The first-rates will gird up their loins, and march with stalwart tread into the lists, to combat, *à l'outrance*, for the baton of the World's Chess Champion, which will be the victor's meed: while the *dii minorum gentium*, albeit incompetent to contend successfully for the topmost prize of all, will nevertheless flock in, animated by the honourable ambition of gaining new distinction, and adding

* This was written just before the meeting of the International Chess Tournament, which took place in London in 1851.

fresh leaves to the laurels they may previously have acquired. This collision and encounter of the acutest and most potent chess intelligences of which the age can boast, cannot fail to be of unique and absorbing interest; and may reasonably be expected to yield a store of games of such excellence, as to entitle them to rank side by side with the admirable models of chess play which the La Bourdonnais-M'Donnell and Staunton-St. Amant matches afford us. In good sooth, I am able to conceive no banquet that could impart a racier or more stimulating flavour to the intellectual palate of the veritable chess amateur, than the spectacle of a struggle in which Staunton, Der Laza, St. Amant, Jaenisch, Petroff, Szen, Kieseritzski, Löwenthal, Buckle, Walker, Slous, Harrwitz, Horwitz, Anderssen, Mongredien, and Hanstein, should take part. He may picture to himself the room crowded with anxious and attentive spectators; the breathless silence, broken only by low and eager whispers, with which a move, on which the fortune of an important game is supposed to turn, is watched; the aspect of the principal combatants themselves, whose knitted and corrugated brows, stern countenances, with sometimes a scarce perceptible nervous twitch of the lips, and a slight swaying to and fro of the body, all plainly indicate the weight and severity of the mental toil, with which the working brain strives and wrestles; and the almost painful excitement that is manifested as THE deciding *partie* of all "begins to appropinque an

end." Lastly, by the aid of a slight degree of imagination, he may people the back ground with the shades of departed chess worthies, looking approval of the scene. The fiery and robustious La Bourdonnais; M'Donnell, with his pale face of calm, impassive calculation; the quick and sensitive features which the canvas of Zoffany has handed down to us as those of André Danican Philidor; Ruy Lopez, the mitred favourite of the Spanish king; and the chivalrous and noble minded Leonardo, with his adventurous compeer, Paolo Boi, the erratic Syracusan Chess Paladin.

To all true chess players it may, perhaps, appear a wasteful and ridiculous excess of words, to say anything laudatory on a subject, which, to those who have studied, and are conversant with its deeper mysteries, possesses far more the character of a science, than that of a mere game. I must, nevertheless, state my conviction that chess is not altogether the barren and profitless pursuit which I have heard some even, who are reputed wise in their generation, pronounce it to be. Its practice calls into activity a man's best intellectual energies, as well as many valuable moral qualities, and will be found a stern, as well as a salutary discipline, to even the strongest minds. To measure one's self against a great chess player, imparts a stimulus to the mental faculties at once beneficial and agreeable, and is productive of the same advantages as were said to be gained by those who entered the arena of controversy

with the celebrated Edmund Burke. "Their antagonist," it was said, "was their helper. They that wrestled with him, strengthened their nerves, and sharpened their skill, that conflict with difficulty obliged them to an intimate acquaintance with their object, and compelled them to consider it in all its relations, and would not suffer them to be superficial."

One chief constituent in the character of a fine chess player is *pluck;* his motto is ever

"Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audacior ito."

By this, however, let me not be understood to hold up to imitation the purposeless obstinacy of the hazy-minded dullard, who, when his game is lost beyond redemption, insists on dragging its slow length along, for the sole purpose, as it would seem, of fretting his opponent and wearying lookers-on; but rather the patient, inflexible purpose, the cool self-reliance and resolution of the clear-headed chess master, whose skill and resource, circumstances of difficulty and peril serve only to develope and call into fuller action, in emergencies when the weaker chess capacity would either totter in dismay, or at once sink in total collapse.

Witness the gallant M'Donnell, after his first hard pounding match with La Bourdonnais, in which the Frenchman beat him no fewer than sixteen games to five—a defeat which, considering the quarter from whence it came, would have settled, I well wot, the stomachs of most ordinary players. Howbeit the

brave Irishman was no ordinary player, but, combined with perfect modesty of demeanour a thorough consciousness of his own pre-eminent ability, and was, moreover, steel to the back-bone. So he rose up, nothing daunted by the perilous buffeting he had sustained, and did battle again with his great opponent in five several matches, the first of which he won, five games to four—a most honourable circumstance, when the disastrous nature of his first overthrow is borne in mind.

Another conspicuous instance of inflexible courage in bearing up against, and partially overcoming, the frowns of adverse fortune, is afforded by the renowned French chess player, M. St. Amant, who began his famous encounter with Mr. Staunton by losing eight consecutive games in a match of the first eleven. It might well be supposed that so calamitous a beginning on his own part, of this national contest, if it did not entirely break the French champion's spirit, would at least have materially affected the strength of his play during the remainder of the struggle. But the sturdy Gaul, far from being downhearted by reason of his first ominous losses, only buckled his sword-belt tighter about him, and caused his blade to whistle round the head of his redoubtable foe in such a fashion, as to succeed in scoring six games ere he ultimately succumbed to the thrusts of a weapon wielded by skill more potent than his own. M. St. Amant, has, I believe, said, and said truly, that he never played with greater vigour and point than

in this important match. He won the thirteenth game in glorious style, dashing into the heart of the enemy's citadel, and scattering outworks and inner defences like chaff. The annals of chess have yet recorded no finer *coup de main.* La Bourdonnais himself could not have done it better; and mightily would it have solaced the spirit of that departed chief, if, revisiting "the glimpses of the moon," he could have witnessed the forethought and admirable combination displayed in this game by the wearer of his mantle.

It has been often remarked, that chess in many respects bears a striking resemblance to actual warfare, and we not unfrequently find military writers exemplifying the description of a fight by reference to the game. The lengthened manœuvres, marchings and countermarchings, of the allied and French armies under Wellington and Marmont, have been often compared to a trial of skill between two expert chess players. The eloquent historian, Alison, in describing the battle of Lutzen, calls in the aid of chess to illustrate his account. "Both parties," he says, "perceiving that the decisive point of the battle was to be found in the ruins of Kaia, strove, by accumulating forces upon it, to secure to themselves so important an acquisition; like two skilful players at chess, who successively bring up all their forces to support the attack or defence, towards the close of the struggle, of an insignificant piece on the board." It is in war also, as in chess, that lofty military capacity, when menaced with imminent peril, and surrounded

by difficulties apparently inextricable, often displays itself in the strongest manner, working its own deliverance either by a course of subtle and profound strategy, or by at once dealing a sudden and crushing stroke on the enemy. From the many proofs of this, I may select the memorable retreat of the heroic and ill-fated Sir John Moore, and his glorious stand at Corunna. I may mention also Wellington's far-sighted wisdom in the formation of the immortal lines of Torres Vedras, behind which—when driven back upon Lisbon by the overwhelming host of Massena, and when, to every thought but his own, the longer continuance of our troops in the Peninsula seemed impossible—he intrenched his invincible little army, arrested permanently the wave of Gallic invasion, and finally, after a series of desperate struggles, swept the choicest legions of France over the Pyrenees, and hurled them in confusion and disgrace upon their own land. During Napoleon's meteoric career, his reliance on his "star" caused him frequently to risk all on the hazard of a single throw, and he was consequently on several occasions placed in situations from which escape seemed hopeless. But however desperate appeared the emergency, his towering genius seemed ever equal to cope with it, and appalling crises in his fortunes, such as Arcola, Aspern, and the Beresina, which would have paralysed the faculties of a punier mind, had only the effect of rousing and bracing the energies of that singular man, to the performance of deeds which have procured for him

a foremost place amongst the conquerors of the earth. I have elsewhere remarked, however, that the same reckless audacity and disregard of consequences, which Napoleon carried to such an extreme in his wars, may have prevented his attaining excellence as a chess player.

The mention of the passage of the Beresina brings to my recollection a very pleasant acquaintance and intercourse, not begun, indeed, but matured and fostered by chess, which I enjoyed for several years with one who occupied a prominent position in connexion with that deplorable event. I allude to the late Admiral Tchichakoff, who commanded a division of the Russian army during the Moscow campaign, and who, it will be remembered, at the head of thirty thousand men, held the opposite bank of the Beresina, with the object of barring the transit of the French army. Impressed with the belief that Napoleon's intention was to attempt the passage at Chabachwiezi, where his force was posted, Tchichakoff persisted in remaining there even after he had been warned of his mistake. The Emperor's real design, however, was to cross at Studienka, which he succeeded in doing, and with the most serviceable part of the remnant of his multitudinous array, effected his escape from apparently inevitable destruction, by one of those daring and masterly strokes, which only a genius like his own could have conceived or executed.

Admiral Tchichakoff was certainly one of the most

agreeable companions in society whom it has ever been my good fortune to know. He spoke English like a native, and his conversation abounded in reminiscence and anecdote of the stirring events of which Europe was the theatre during the end of the last, and the beginning of this century, as well as of the principal personages who figured as actors on the scene at that momentous period, with many of whom he was personally acquainted. He entertained a great admiration for Nelson, whom he had known well, and was never weary of descanting on the prowess of England's naval hero. The sufferings brought on his country by the pitiless ambition of Napoleon, and the retributive justice that fell so heavily on the French after their abandonment of Moscow, were sometimes his theme. While dwelling on such details, the old man's dimmed eyes (he was then gradually becoming blind) would light up with some show of their ancient fire, his attenuated features quiver with emotion, and the white hair play about his temples, as, carried away by the eager flow of his discourse, his head shook with unwonted excitement.

Although no great proficient in chess, the Admiral took much pleasure in the game, and particularly in the examination of difficult positions and problems, in solving which he displayed no small quickness and aptitude. I first knew him at Brighton, in the year 1843, about the time of the match between England and France, in the progress of which he was much interested; and I shall not easily forget the energetic

satisfaction he expressed on hearing from me the triumph of the English player. I never heard him allude to the affair of the Beresina but once, and that was one evening after I had been dining alone with him. We had been talking about chess, and the conversation then turning on the Russian campaign, I inadvertently made a depreciatory remark on Kutosof, who had allowed Napoleon, before reaching the Beresina, to pass his formidable force without an attempt to impede him. The good Admiral, sipping his glass of wine, remarked with a smile,—"Ay, and they said he checkmated me too afterwards."

But, in truth, the blame that has been generally attached to Tchichakoff, because he did not cut off Napoleon at the Beresina, is scarcely founded in justice. He had no doubt thirty thousand men, and one hundred and fifty guns at his command, but the French Emperor had forty thousand efficient combatants, with two hundred and fifty guns, and was, moreover, at bay, and driven to desperation. The Russian commander might, therefore, have considered it good policy to avoid a bloody engagement, and save the lives of his troops, by allowing his formidable enemy to pass by him; foreseeing, as he must have done, the disastrous fate which surely awaited the invading host.

There are but few indifferent persons, I should think, who in glancing carelessly at a well played chess game in the column of a newspaper, can even in a remote degree appreciate the amount of mental

labour of which it is the product. Suppose it to be the terminating *partie* of an important match, those forty or fifty moves, which appear so dry and devoid of interest in bare print, represent, nevertheless, a world of anxious reflection and deep calculation. We have not then before us the ploughed foreheads, and compressed lips of the players, whose rival intellects are, as it were, locked and twisted together in the stern wrestle for mastery; neither, when the fight is over, do we behold the proud swelling of the victor, and, mayhap, the downcast bearing of the vanquished combatant.

I do not know whether it is more difficult to win gracefully at chess, or to lose without giving way to an undue exhibition of pique and disappointment. Both are hard matters to compass, and to effect them *cum grano*, requires a natural generosity of mind, and evenness of disposition, which but few possess. Therefore it is that this game forms such an admirable discipline to the temper. In practising it, the strictest self control is indispensable. Did winning players usually permit themselves to give open play to their feelings of triumphant exultation, and losers to express without restraint the bitterness and exasperation of defeat, chess clubs would be places of discord and howling, only to be equalled by the bear den in a zoological garden. But the necessity of maintaining self-command is so perfectly understood and acted upon, that in every well conducted place of chess resort, save an occasional irrepressible cry of

anguish from a beaten one, it is rare indeed to encounter anything that is not in perfect accordance with the ordinary courtesies of society. Now and then, however, one certainly does come across an opponent of a bent of mind so ill conditioned, that it is difficult to say whether to win or lose is most unpleasant. If the former, you are probably obliged to listen to a running accompaniment of angry jeremiads while the game lasts, clinched by a rude assurance, when it is over, that you had no business whatever to win; and should your evil star decree you vanquished, your amiable adversary takes good care that you shall drink without stint of the Marah of defeat. From the moment he has obtained an advantage, it is worth money to see how he expands and burgeons—challenging the admiration of lookers on, as one who should say, "You see how I can thrash this fellow!" — wagging his head with a jaunty air, and slapping down his pieces on the board when he moves, as if he were actually slapping your face at every *coup*. Thrice woe upon you, wretched man, when the finale is reached; certes, as the broken winded trumpeter in the "Bride of Lammermoor," declares, "the scraugh o' a clockin hen" is music to the merciless chuckling under which you are then doomed to wince.

I have known persons, whose suavity of disposition nothing else could touch, display over a chess-board the most strange and painful irascibility. In one instance the individual, who was a devoted amateur

of the game, wisely gave up chess altogether, solely, as he assured me, on account of his total inability to repress an outbreak of anger when he happened to lose. In illustration of what I have just written, I may relate an anecdote I once heard from the lips of a friend, of the genuineness of which I entertain no doubt. Many years ago my informant was playing chess with an intimate friend, an old clergyman, who was a deep enthusiast of the game. The chessmen they used were a beautiful new Chinese set of delicately-carved ivory, which the clergyman had just received as a present from abroad. The contest, which was a long one, had gone against my friend from the beginning, and he was just on the point of striking his flag, when an unlooked-for oversight, on the part of his adversary, enabled him to give a peremptory mate. The loser, without uttering a word, precipitately rose from the table, swept all the pieces violently on the floor, and frantically trod them under foot. The poor old gentleman then, after gazing vacantly for a little while on the ruin he had made, sat down on a chair, and wept like a child.

One of the former Earls of Stair, as I have heard, or read somewhere, was in the habit of playing chess with a friend, hight Colonel Stewart. His lordship, who was of an eccentric, and withal exceedingly choleric nature, not content with storming awfully when he lost, would not scruple occasionally to have recourse to the *voie du fait*, and project a snuffer-tray, or the first thing

that came to his hand, at his opponent's head. When the subdolous Colonel, therefore, had a mate at his command, and expected any little attention of this sort, he used to start to his feet after moving, and make for behind the door of the room, from which place of retreat he would thrust his head and bawl out, "Checkmate, my lord!" Carte, the historian, mentions a chess-match in the year 1087, between our Henry I., before he became King, and Louis le Gros, son of Philip, king of France. Louis, having lost several games, as well as a good deal of money, was so exasperated, that he flung the chessmen at Henry's head; in return for which Henry assaulted the French prince with the board, laid him bleeding on the ground, and, but for timely interference, would have killed him outright. Daines Barrington, however, who is unwilling to allow either to England or France so early an acquaintance with chess as this anecdote implies, is rather of opinion that the game in question must have been draughts.

A singular instance of the influence which disease exercises in impairing the chess capacity, occurred a few years since, in the case of the late Mr. Popert. This gentleman, who, as is well known, was one of the most powerful and finished players in Europe, when in the full blow of his chess strength, was smitten either by apoplexy, or some malady of a similar nature, upon recovering from which, it was found that his chess faculty had undergone a peculiar modification. His power of play had not disappeared, but simply

become depreciated to such an extent, as to oblige him to receive the Knight from opponents to whom he had formerly rendered Pawn and two moves. In short, from being an undoubted first-rate, he had fallen to the level of an indifferent third-rate player. It may be thought that an alteration so great and distressing as this, would have had the effect of causing Mr. Popert to abandon the field altogether; but, so far from this being the case, so inherent was his *scaccicus amor*, that he was always anxious to play with anybody, and would, of his own accord, propose to receive odds, when he considered they could be given him by his antagonist. I frequently, at his own urgent solicitation, gave him the Knight at that time; and, in his feeble and decrepid style of play, could never discover a trace of the vigorous solidity, accurate calculation, and unerring precision, which so eminently characterised his game in former days, when he yielded me Pawn and two without difficulty. The last time I saw him was at the Divan in the Strand. He had been seized, poor fellow, with some kind of fit in the street, and was brought in there, with his clothes muddy, and hat bent out of shape. Having been placed on a sofa where I was sitting, he presently revived a little, and propping himself against my shoulder, attempted, with "lack-lustre eye," to follow the progress of a neighbouring game. Mr. Popert, I believe, died not long after this incident.

It will not, I think, be uninteresting to chess amateurs, to hear some slight mention of that worthy man

and admirable chess-player, the late Mr. Donaldson of Edinburgh, who obtained a lasting and well-earned celebrity for the remarkable ability displayed by him in the chief conduct, on the Scotch side, of the great chess match that took place in 1828 between London and Edinburgh. It is much to be regretted that, excepting the games in the above match, and one or two stray *parties* in the "Chess Player's Chronicle," there should be no recorded specimens of this able player's fine talent.

A good many years ago I had the pleasure, as well as great advantage, of more than a twelvemonth's constant practice with "the Baillie" (as he was called by his familiars, from having once held that office in the Edinburgh Town Council), and frequent and tremendous were the bastings which I received from him during that period. It came about thus: I was then residing in Edinburgh, and happened to stroll one day with a friend who was a member into the Chess-club. Save an occasional game in India, or on board ship, to divert the *ennui* of a long voyage, I had then no practical acquaintance with chess; so benighted, indeed, was my condition, that I was ignorant of any book having been written on the subject, and had scarcely even heard of the existence of a chess-club. It was with no small degree of surprise, therefore, mixed as I remember, with something of contempt, that I regarded the interest and excitement displayed by the various players who were carrying on their contests around me. My friend, by way of a

joke, I suppose, set me to play with Mr. Donaldson, who gave me a Rook, and caused me to bite the dust several times in the course of the afternoon. I encountered him again the next day at the same odds, but with no better success, and for a fortnight I don't think that I won above a couple of games. After that I did better, and in about four months' time, I overcame the odds of the Rook. I then received the Knight from my formidable antagonist, which I continued to do until I left Edinburgh, making with that advantage nearly even games.

Mr. Donaldson was the first really strong chess-player I ever encountered, and I may, therefore, perhaps, have a tendency to over-estimate his ability; but making allowance for a little exaggeration in myself on that score, I still believe that he only required (what he never had) practice with players of a powerful calibre, to have placed him on the topmost chess level. His style of play was very like that of La Bourdonnais, whom, judging from the bust of the celebrated Frenchman, it has always struck me that he resembled in his anterior cerebral conformation. His mode of assaulting, like that of the great chess-player just named, was full of impetuosity and fire, but its vehemence was ever tempered and held in check, by the dictates of a sound, sober judgment. "*Le soldat Anglais,*" says General Foy, "*possède la qualité la plus précieuse dans la guerre, le calme dans la colère.*" And this quality, equally valuable in chess as in war, Mr. Donaldson certainly possessed in a high degree.

I may mention that he almost invariably played the King's Knight's gambit with me, and it is needless to say, had a perfect mastery over all the attacking resources of that beautiful opening. Peace be with the good Baillie! "The Land o' Cakes" numbers amongst her sons many long heads and shrewd brains, but it will be some time, I wis, ere she produce another such chess-player as James Donaldson.

Before winding up these erratic memoranda, I must plane off one more little "chip" on the subject of the coming Tournament. There is now, I would fain hope, no rational doubt of the complete success of this long contemplated scheme. In bringing it to bear, the sole object of the promoters has been to forward, as far as in them lies, the interests of chess, and at the same time to gratify the wishes of the numerous votaries of the game, by providing an arena, and if possible, adequate prizes, on which, and for which, it shall be competent for chess athletes of all countries to prove their skill and strength. To accomplish this end, the managing Committee have adopted what, in their judgment, appeared the most desirable means. They have endeavoured to consult the wishes, and so carry with them all classes of the chess community here, and their exertions have been met by co-operation, and substantial aid in the shape of subscriptions, from nearly every part of the kingdom. The note of preparation in Great Britain has been cheerfully and promptly taken up on the Continent, from whence

Frenchman, German, Russian, Pole, and Hungarian, sinking for the nonce all national differences, will, I dare to say, come over to the bloodless fray, in the spirit of the stirring old Scottish refrain :—

> "Then cock up your beaver, and cock it fu' sprush,
> We'll over the *water* and give them a brush ;
> There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour.
> Hey ! Johnnie lad, cock up your beaver ! "

A DESULTORY RAMBLE WITH THE CHESSMEN.

"THE game and playe of the Chesse" is one of the most ancient pastimes invented by man; and albeit we do not agree with the late M. Alexandre, whose theory it was, that the passage in 2 Sam. ii. 14, "And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us," had reference to chess; yet there can be little doubt that the game, as it existed in India, in the primitive form of Chaturanga, may claim an antiquity coeval with that of many of the sacred writings. But although the various descriptions of Chaturanga, as found in the Hindu Puranas—works composed no man can say when, unquestionably, however, many ages before our era—render it impossible to assign a precise date to its invention; still the investigations of Professor Forbes, the result of which we have in his ingenious and lucid "Treatise on the Origin and Progress of Chess," have proved, beyond the possibility of future cavil, that India was its birth place and cradle. The

learned Professor, with a vigorous hand, has swept away the cobwebs with which this interesting subject has from time immemorial been thickly overlaid, and worthily earned the gratitude of all true lovers of chess science, in that he has substituted clear and intelligible reasoning and facts for the vagaries of absurd tradition, and thrown more light on an obscure and difficult theme, than all the writers upon it who have preceded him.

Chess is not only the king of games in itself, but it is a recreation in which many eminent crowned heads have taken especial pleasure; amongst whom we may enumerate Charlemagne, Timur, Sebastian, king of Portugal, Philip II. of Spain, the Emperor Charles V., Catherine of Medicis, Pope Leo X., Henry IV. of France, Queen Elizabeth, Louis XIII., Louis XIV., William III., Charles XII. of Sweden, Napoleon I., and Napoleon III. The last-named sovereign has, we should think, been too deeply occupied lately in the arduous task of directing the military energies of his brave people against the Emperor of Russia, to allow of his devoting much time to the peaceful combats of the exchequer; but when *pauper et exul* in this country, years ago, he was wont to play chess a good deal, and, to say the truth, not to play it very well. A friend of ours, a strong though not first-rate player, was in the habit of giving him the Knight in those days, and used to win largely at these heavy odds; so that Louis Napoleon, like his renowned uncle, is a greater adept in the profound mysteries of

state-craft than in the comparatively insignificant tactics of the chess-board. It strikes us, by the way, that there is a resemblance of no ordinary kind between the character of William of Orange, whose name we have mentioned above as a chess-player, and that of the present ruler of the French. In both, the same thought-laden brow, cold severity of aspect, and pale immobility of feature; in both that profound astuteness and subtlety of nature which enables its possessor to divine, as it were by instinct, the hidden motives of others, while his own designs are wrapped in impenetrable secrecy; in both, that long-sighted wisdom which pierces beyond the present into the future, and calculates events to come with an accuracy that seems marvellous to feebler intellects; in both, the same comprehensive grasp of mind, adamantine force of will, resolute tenacity of purpose, and undaunted courage. Finally, both these extraordinary men attained the summit of their ambition by means which morality certainly cannot justify; but the one used, and the other is using the power so acquired, with a firmness, sagacity, and moderation, to which history can present but few parallels.

Several of the royal race of Stuart were acquainted with chess. In the Register House of Edinburgh there is preserved an inventory of the effects of the unhappy Queen Mary, which were left in the castle when she was sent to Lochleven, and must have subsequently passed into the keeping of her son, King James. This inventory contains a list and minute

description of the Queen's jewels, wearing apparel, books, and other chattels, among which are enumerated the following items, which show that as Mary had amongst her personal effects three sets of chessmen, and two works on the game, she was, in all probability, herself a chess-player. "The play of the Chas" was no doubt Caxton's well-known translation of Cesolis; it is not, however, so easy to conjecture who the author of the "litle buik" was:—

> Ane quhite polk* of greit Chas men of bane,
> Ane litle grene polk with sum Chas men,
> Ane quhite buist† with Chas men in personages of woid.
> Buikis.
> The play of the Chas.
> A litle buik of the Chas.

Mary's son, the British Solomon, James I, patronised chess in his own grandiose manner. In one of his speeches he says, "The power of Kings is in the hands of the Lord. They can exalt low things, and abase high things, making their subjects like men at chess, a Pawn to take a Bishop or a Knight." The unfortunate Charles I. was an ardent chess-player, and is mentioned in an old English translation of Greco's work on the game in my possession, as having constantly used it as a recreation. No doubt he must have found it a solace and a distraction in the dark hours of his adversity. There are in the British Museum some diaries kept by Captain Richard Symonds, an officer of the Royal Army, in which it is

* Bag. † Box.

stated, "Round about the King's Chess Board this verse:"—

"Subditus et princeps istis sine sanguine certent."

The date 1643 was on the board, and the line would appear to contain a touching allusion to the state of the poor King's own fortunes.

In his inauguratory speech at the Leamington chess gathering in June 1855, the noble President, Lord Lyttelton, described the chess fraternity as having, in common with the race of poets, somewhat the reputation of a *genus irritabile*. It is, indeed, very probable that the peculiar balance of the mental faculties which gives chess power, may have an affinity to the sensitive idiosyncracy for which the children of Apollo have in all time been remarkable; but even supposing this not to be the case, there is quite sufficient, we opine, in the varying excitement of chess-play itself, to account for the irritable tendencies of many of the cultivators of the noble game. There are few who can retain perfect self-possession as winners, and fewer still have sufficient self-command to restrain all outward exhibition of wounded *amour propre*, which every beaten chess-player must, in a greater or less degree, experience. He who has attained such stoical self-composure as to be able to imitate the wolf that

"Dies in *silence*, biting hard
Amidst the dying hounds,"

we take to be no ordinary philosopher. "*Fortior est qui vincit se ipsum quam qui fortissima oppida ex-*

pugnet," moralises the copy-book. "Keep your temper," says an old work on Chess now before us; "and if you cannot gain a victory over your adversary, gain one over yourself." At the same time we must state our belief, that the power to retain one's evenness of mind under defeat depends very much on the kind of antagonist with whom you play. There are some people to whom you would almost as lief undergo *sus per coll.* as lose a single game; who exhibit an intolerable self-complacency, mingled with a contemptuous condescension, that is enough to drive the unlucky vanquished one utterly wild. Others, again, display a genuine courtesy, and even sympathy of manner, which you feel to spring from an innate generosity that disdains to trample on the fallen, and would shrink, as from a crime, from adding, by word or gesture, to the mortification of defeat. The Chess amateur who, within our knowledge, showed the most perfect equanimity over the board, was the late Mr. Tuckett. Whether as winner or loser, his demeanour towards his opponent was always the same—mild, courteous, self-possessed, and unaffectedly good-humoured. During a long period of time, in the course of which we both played with him much ourselves and witnessed his play with others, we never knew him once otherwise than we have just described. Mr. Tuckett had almost abandoned the practice of chess for some years before his death. He was a very strong player; his game being

characterised by depth and solidity, rather than brilliancy of style.

We cannot at present recollect any instance in which the chess-players of the East have been said to exhibit deficiency of temper while at play; but almost all Orientals, particularly Persians, who are much devoted to chess, despite the ordinary staid dignity of their manners, are naturally touchy and prone to wrath. It is by no means unlikely, therefore, that even such grave and reverend signors as Khalif of Misr, Adali of Rūm, Rabrah of Khatai, the Khalif Mutasim, Khajah Ali Shatrangi, and other chess celebrities of Orient climes, may now and then have discarded their propriety when losing, and caused their opponents to eat wonderful dirt by reason of the sudden grasping of beards, and rough handling of puggrees. As for chess in the days of chivalry and Charlemagne, it must have been rather a perilous business to engage in, seeing that the infliction of a checkmate on your adversary was not unlikely to be followed by a cracked crown, or something worse to yourself. When the *argumentum scaccicum* went against a choleric duke or count of the Empire in those happy times, the *argumentum baculinum* was always at hand, in the shape of a speedy shower of lumbering chess pieces, or even the ponderous board itself, with which the worsted hero would make no scruple to pound his conqueror within an inch of his life.

Chess may be made either a light pastime, or

studied and practised as a science. In the former case, it is easy work enough, or rather no work at all; but in the latter, there is no harder toil to which the mind can be subjected. Old Arthur Saul, in his "Famous Game of Chesse Play," counsels it to be resorted to as a solace from graver occupation:—

> "When thou with study deep hast toyl'd,
> And overdull'd thy braine,
> Then use this game, which will refresh
> Thy wits and it againe."

And the redoubtable Sam Slick gives the following amusing specimen of the drawing room or "skittling" style of play. A midshipman is at chess with a young lady:—

"Suppose," said the jolly tar to his fair friend, "suppose we strip as we go; it's great fun."

"I don't understand you," said the young lady, with an offended toss of her pretty head.

"What! not know what strip as we go is?"

"I don't know what you mean, sir."

"Why, this is the rule. Anything you *can* take, you are bound to take, and strip the board as you go on. It shortens the game amazingly."

Chess, viewed in its more serious aspect, however, is a very different thing. Who that has played an important match at this singular game, can ever forget the heavy burden then laid upon him? The imagination on full stretch in devising combinations, to test the soundness of which the reflecting and calculating powers are sternly tasked; the unceasing

vigilance of eye indispensable at this intellectual small sword, in order to detect the feints and parry the lunges of your opponent; the wearing strain on the nervous system, as it now thrills with hope, now droops with apprehension: the triumphant beating of the heart as victory becomes assured, and the iron entering the soul with the consciousness of inevitable defeat!

See that pair of chess athletes striving for the mastery! They are playing the deciding game of a great match. On the face and head of this one the impress of a powerful intellect is unmistakably stamped. A few minutes since he committed himself to a combination in which he now sees a hideous flaw, that may cost him the game. Despite his efforts to appear calm, his flushed countenance, covered with beads of perspiration, betrays the inward trouble of his spirit. His eye is restless, his features work almost convulsively, and his respiration is broken by long drawn sighs, as he bends the whole force of his strong brain to the labour of retrieving, if possible, the error he has committed. The other combatant is a man of spare frame, and of rather a careworn cast of visage, which is bent down over the board so as almost to touch the pieces. His knitted brow and rigid physiognomy appear at first to express nothing but profound thought; yet a closer scrutiny may detect, by a passing quiver of the lip, and a slight trembling of the hand, that there is a turmoil of excitement within his breast also, of which he is,

nevertheless, sufficient master of himself to restrain almost every external symptom. The game proceeds. The player first mentioned, having abandoned all hope of winning, now strains every nerve to effect a draw, and so for the time to save his laurels. But he is in the midst of toils from which there is no extrication, and he yields at last, just as his relentless foe is about to bestow on him the finishing mate. Let us draw a veil over the poor fellow's misery. By this disaster he has irreparably tarnished a brilliant and hard won chess reputation, and he will retire to bed (but not to rest) this night, and for many a night to come, one of the most unhappy men in England.

Before engaging in a chess-match, it is highly desirable that the mental faculties, as well as the bodily powers, should be in the highest attainable working order, as any cloudiness or weakness in either will infallibly tell injuriously on the play. In fact, we believe that previous to commencing an important contest of this kind, the chances of success would be considerably enhanced by going into regular training, as if for a pugilistic encounter. Indifferent bodily health may be compatible with the highest proficiency in mathematics, or any other of the sciences; and it may not prove any obstacle to either the poet, painter, or historian, in regard to the successful prosecution of their several pursuits. But it is not so with chess. Caïssa is a hard taskmistress, and requires in the aspirants to high places in her

court, nerves of steel, and constitutions of iron; and those who, not having such requisites, plunge into the toil and excitement of continued hard chess-play, will probably in the end have to suffer the penalty of seriously impaired health, or possibly abridged lives. In saying this, we are quite aware that there are fine chess-players whose health is not robust; but these, for the most part, confine themselves to giving odds, or playing even games occasionally only, and cautiously abstain from overtasking their physical powers in difficult matches.

Sir John Harrington, the brilliant and witty godson of Queen Elizabeth, in his "Treatise on Playe," gives a curious instance of sensitiveness in regard to chess:—

"I remember," says he, "fower years since, a very near kinsman of myne, because I lost a game at chesse somewhat too paciently unto him, whearby he mistrusted, as it was indeed, that I lost it voluntary: vowed he wold never play with me at chesse agayne, though hee love the game, and wee meet often, neyther can I hyer him with the best horse I have to dispence with this foolysh vow."

It is our opinion that Sir John Harrington, as we see from the foregoing passage that he played chess, must have played it well, and probably could have given the Rook to most players of his own time. By the unanimous consent of the age in which he lived, he was pronounced a man of extraordinary wit, though his writings, we suppose, would not obtain for him so great a reputation at the present day. This

is Mr. Malone's opinion, and is, no doubt, correct in the main. It is, however, indisputable that he possessed an elegant fancy, and rich humour, together with singular courage, shrewdness, and caution. *Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum,* is a maxim that occurs more than once in his correspondence. It seems, likely, therefore, that a turn for chess, in conjunction with such mental dispositions, ought to have rendered the celebrated translator of the "Orlando Furioso" a strong player.

The writer of this has often lingered on the grass-grown site of the old manor-house of Kelston, about four miles from Bath, once the residence of the "saucy godson" of England's Elizabeth, and pictured him at chess there with his neighbour, crony, and brother-knight, worthy Sir Hugh Portman of Orchard; and taking a higher flight still, imagination has even represented him as crossing Pawns in his own great parlour with his royal godmother herself, with Burleigh, his son Sir R. Cecil, and Sir Christopher Hatton, all intimate friends of Harrington, as lookers-on. This might easily have occurred, as Elizabeth, who is known to have cultivated chess,* visited Sir

* Here is a description of a chess equipage, from an inventory of Kenilworth Castle, dated 1584, which the Virgin Queen may have actually used, as her famous visit to Kenilworth occurred in the July of the following year, 1585:—"A chesse boarde of ebanie, with checkars of christall and other stones, layed with silver, garnished with beares and ragged staves, and cinque foiles of silver. The XXXII. men likewise of christall and other stones sett, the one sorte in silver white, the other gilte, in a case gilded and lyned with green cotton."

John Harrington at Kelston, during one of her progresses in 1591—a condescension, by the way, that afterwards obliged her unlucky host to sell a considerable part of his property, in order to liquidate the charges incurred by him in entertaining her. Some time after this, Sir John, in riding over an estate called "Nyland," which had been thus lost to him, turned round to his man John Combe, who followed, and said,—

> "John, John, this Nyland,
> Alas! was once my land."

To which the serving-man promptly responded:

> "If you had had more wit, sir,
> It might have been yours yet, sir."

The ancient mansion of Kelston, although rich in classical memories, was ruthlessly demolished about ninety years ago, and a new house erected in its neighbourhood, by another possessor of the property. Many of the old out-buildings, however, still remain, together with a walled orchard, full of gnarled and hoary old fruit-trees, from which Sir John, doubtless, ate many a pippin of his own graffing. The worthy knight himself, in company with a long line of his descendants, sleeps peacefully within the small antique church and churchyard hard by. The place that knew them once, knows them no more; and to use the words of Southey,—

> "Alas! the good old name is dead,
> And only to be seen on a tombstone;
> A name that has gone down from sire to son
> For many generations."

Lady Holland, in her agreeable Memoir of her father, Sydney Smith, gives a pleasant glimpse of the redoubtable Edinburgh Reviewer as a chess-player. Sydney Smith at chess! Powers of facetiousness! a rich treat it would have been to see him play! What an inexhaustible outlet to that exquisite wit and racy humour, tempered ever by shrewdest wisdom, would the nomenclature and vicissitudes of the game have afforded! He would have expatiated about Bishops, for instance, in a way "to draw three souls out of one weaver." If he failed to demolish his opponents by force of play, he must certainly have asphyxiated them with laughter. "In his youth," writes Lady Holland, "my father had been very fond of the game of chess, but had left it off for many years. He suddenly took it into his head to resume it this winter, and selected me, *faute de mieux*, as his antagonist. His mode of play was very characteristic: bold, rapid attack, without a moment's pause or indecision, which, I suspect, would have exposed him to danger from a more experienced adversary; but as it was, with a profound contempt for my skill, promising me a shilling if I beat him, he sat down with a book in his hand, looked up for an instant, made a move, and beat me regularly every night through the winter. At last I won my shilling, but lost my playfellow: he never challenged me again."

The mention of the word shilling, brings to our recollection a little anecdote connected with that coin, which, with the reader's permission, we will

relate. Amongst the unfailing frequenters of a well known metropolitan chess resort, there used formerly to be one whom we shall call Mr. Pismire. Every person has a soft point in his character, and the weakness of this amiable individual was a desire to pick up the unconsidered shillings of any unwary stranger who visited the place in question for the purpose of chess play. To this end the good man was wont to sit daily, newspaper in hand, with one eye on the print, and the other on the entrance door, patiently awaiting the advent of a new face, the owner of which he would lose no time in accosting, with a bland grin, and the unvarying formula—"Do you play chess, sir? Are you a chess player?" It chanced one evening that a strange Frenchman entered the saloon aforesaid; and the unsophisticated foreigner having answered in the affirmative to the invitation of Mr. Pismire, was caught up in the toils, and speedily found himself seated opposite to that worthy, with a board and men between them. "Play for a shilling, sir?" interrogated the provident Pismire. "Yes, certainly, one shilling," said the other. Well, after playing the whole evening, a computation of the score gave a balance of sixteen or eighteen games against the countryman of La Bourdonnais, who forthwith drew out a shilling, and politely tendered it to his conqueror. "A mistake, sir, we played for a shilling," quoth Pismire. "Certainly, one shilling; so I understand; and dere is one shilling, sar. Dere is no mistake at all."

"But I meant a shilling a game, sir," cried Pismire. "Ah, ah! dat I *not* understand." answered the French gentleman; "when we commence, you say, 'Play for one shilling?' and I say, 'Yes, certainly,' and dere, if you please, is the money." So saying, our gallant ally, with a bow, a smile, and a shrug, placed the coin on the table, and serenely went his way, leaving the sorrowful Mr. Pismire alone with his glory—and his shilling.

Courteous reader, will you put on your hat, and accompany us in a short stroll forth from the beautiful City of the Crescent, along the sinuous banks of the pleasant Avon? Our other companion is a young relative of ours, who has lately taken up chess with a kind of passionate eagerness, not unfrequently seen in beginners, and, for that matter, in many also who have been familiar with the chess board from their youth. It is a glorious day in August, and the fervid summer heat is now delightfully tempered by a cool breeze, that steals through the valley, rich with green pasturage, in which lies embosomed the ancient "City of the Waters of the Sun." The fields that crown the heights around us are yellowing to harvest, and the river glides lasily at our feet in shining and tranquil beauty, its stillness broken only by the occasional leap of a fish, or dip of a passing oar. Let us stretch ourselves for a few minutes beneath this shady clump of alders. What book have we just pulled from our pocket, do you say? A volume of Dibdin's quaint "Bibliomania;"

and, as we live, it opens at the account of the famous chess encounter between Philemon and Narcottus, from which we will read you a passage or two. We must premise, that the diversion of Philemon's attention, by an inadvertent remark touching the antiquity of the game, made by Lysander, a friend in the room, has caused him to lose his Queen.

"Shouts of applause from Narcottus's men rent the vaulted air; while grief and consternation possessed the astonished army of Philemon. 'Away with your antiquarian questions!' exclaimed the latter, looking sharply at Lysander; 'away with your old editions of the game of chess! The moment is critical, and I fear the day may be lost. Now for desperate action!' So saying, he bade the King exhort his dismayed subjects. His majesty made a spirited oration, and called upon Sir Launcelot, the most distinguished of the two Knights, to be mindful of his own and of his country's honour; to spare the effusion of blood as much as possible, but rather to place victory or defeat on the comparative skill of the officers; and, at all events, to rally round that throne which had conferred such high marks of distinction on his ancestors." Sir Launcelot returns a loyal and courageous answer to this exhortation, and then "clapped spurs to his horse, and after driving an unprotected Bishop into the midst of the foot-soldiers, who quickly took him prisoner, he sprang forward, with a lion-like nimbleness and

ferocity, to prick out Sir Galaad, the only remaining Knight in the adverse army, to single combat. Sir Galaad, strong and wary, like the Greenland bear, when assailed by the darts and bullets of our whale-fishing men, marked the fury of Sir Launcelot's course, and sought rather to present a formidable defence, by calling to aid his elephants, than to meet such a champion single-handed. A shrill blast from his horn told the danger of his situation, and the necessity of help. What should now be done? The unbroken ranks of Philemon's men presented a fearful front to the advance of the elephants, and the recent capture of a venerable Bishop had made the monarch on Narcottus's side justly fearful of risking the safety of his empire, by leaving himself wholly without episcopal aid. Meanwhile the progress of Sir Launcelot was marked with blood; and he was, of necessity, compelled to slaughter a host of common men, who stood thickly around Sir Galaad, resolved to conquer or die by his side. At length, as Master Laneham aptly expresses it, 'get they grysly together.' The hostile leaders met; there was neither time nor disposition for parley. Sir Galaad threw his javelin with well-directed fury; which, flying within a hair's breadth of Sir Launcelot's shoulder, passed onward, and, grazing the cheek of a foot-soldier, stood quivering in the sand. He was then about to draw his ponderous sword; but the tremendous spear of Sir Launcelot, whizzing strongly in the air, passed through his thickly-quilted belt,

and, burying itself in his bowels, made Sir Galaad to fall breathless from his horse. Now, you might hear the shouts of victory on one side, and the groans of the vanquished on the other, or, as old Homer expresses it,—

> "'Victors' and vanquish'd shouts promiscuous rise,
> With streams of blood the slippery fields are dyed,
> And slaughtered heroes swell the dreadful tide.'"

At this point, our young cousin, who is something of an enthusiast, but a talented fellow withal, suddenly sprang to his feet, and with extended right arm, to our no small surprise, delivered himself thus:—"The description of that glorious fray has excited my imagination, and fired my blood to such an extent, that I am filled with a noble ardour, and feel endued as with the strength of a giant. I, too, am a chess-player! Hip, huzza! I challenge Anderssen, I challenge Heydebrand, I challenge Staunton, I challenge Buckle, I challenge Löwenthal, I challenge St. Amant; and if there be any other chess *magnifico* who feels aggrieved at not being included in the above defiance, down goes the gauntlet to him also. Come one, come all! and he that will chess with me for a thousand pounds, let him lend me the money, and I'll have at him!"

"Most valiant Sir Philidor the Second," said we, plucking our friend gently by the skirt, "sit down again. This fine frenzy makes us fear that you may have by mistake imbibed more than was good for you of that pale sherry and bitter beer at lunch, before

we set out on our walk. But, be that as it may, learn from us, who have had some experience in the matter, that no one, however great his natural aptitude for the game—and yours, we admit, to be considerable—ever became a first-rate chess-player at a bound, excepting, if we may take his own account, Deschapelles. The road that leads to eminence in this pursuit is encumbered with many difficulties; and you have fallen into the common error of mistaking the power to appreciate excellence, for the possession of the quality itself. It is scarce six months since you first knew the moves, and any one of the great players you have just named, would give you a couple of pieces for half a year to come, and thrash you into the bargain. To obtain a chance of being able to play on even terms with them, you would have to go through a course of combined study and practice, such as you have not imagined even in a dream; and for you, who have your way to make in life, and no revenue but your good spirits to feed and clothe you, to waste your time thus would be unspeakable folly. If you cultivate chess wisely, it may be of infinite service to you, in developing and strengthening those faculties, on the due exercise of which success in your future career will mainly depend; we mean reflection, calculation, perseverance, caution, self-reliance, patience; and last, but not least, consideration for the feelings of others. But beware how you permit your interest in chess to acquire such predominance, as to allow it to interfere

with the serious objects of existence. This would be to commit a fatal error, against which it is necessary to warn you; for there is a fascination about the game, which, if you were weak enough to yield to its unrestrained influence, might induce a distaste for any other kind of employment; and in the end, perhaps, destroy all capacity for useful exertion. We would also impress on you——" Here our discourse was interrupted by a loud snore, and, turning our head, we discovered that the unmannered boy, for whose benefit we were lavishing these pearls of wisdom, had fallen asleep. Whereupon, having administered an indignant poke in the ribs with our stick, which caused him to wake with a startled howl, we proceeded together on our walk.

In giving a slight mention of the Passage of Arms, over which Caïssa presided, in Cavendish Square, in the year of the Great Exhibition, it is not our intention to touch on the internecine feuds in the British chess world, to which the project of the said meeting unhappily gave birth; neither do we desire to renew the unutterable griefs of those who suffered disaster at that Chess Ashby-de-la Zouche. Was not a friend—in fact, a namesake of our own—overthrown in those fatal lists by a pestilent fine player, hight Szen, who cast him from his saddle as deftly as Bois Guilbert was unhorsed by the Disinherited Knight? But we would have you to know that our respectable *amigo* was labouring, at that time, under a mortal disorder (from which he afterwards

miraculously recovered) called "palpitating *fungus in cerebro*:" had it not been for which, by the mitre of Ruy Lopez, and by the crozier of Marcus Hieronymus, bishop of Alba, he would have tickled the puissant Hungarian othergates!

Szen is, so to speak, the most jovial of chess players. There was an air of *insouciance* about him; a rollicking good humour, perpetually dancing in his large round eyes, that contrasted strikingly with the care-worn looks of some of the other combatants in the tournament, and was very pleasant to behold. Izaak Walton advises the young angler, in impaling his worm on the hook, to "do it as if he loved him:" in like manner Szen, with an irresistible Pawn, thrusts his opponent to death in the most affectionate manner possible; and when he himself is moribund, to look at his cheerful countenance, you would think that to be checkmated was the pleasantest thing in the world.

It is a sultry morning in the latter part of May, 1851, as we enter the ground floor of No. 5 Cavendish Square—the arena of the Chess Tournament. Passing through a large outer apartment, appropriated to the provincial matches, we find ourselves standing in a smaller room, which is devoted to the general contests. The fray has already commenced; and some half dozen tables are occupied by combatants, each of whom is, no doubt, full of confident hope—

> "And the stern joy which warriors feel
> In foemen worthy of their steel."

Let us watch, for a little, the progress of the encounter nearest to us. The antagonists are Mr. Wyvill and Herr Löwe, whose styles of play being very different, the struggle between them should possess more than usual interest. How is this?—Mr. Wyvill minus a piece so early in the game; Even so: the astute German has managed to capture an officer; and already a smile of anticipated victory sits on the countenance of Herr Löwe. And small blame to him either: for, between two such fine players, the disparity of force that now exists may be almost said to decide the game. Not so, however, thinks Mr. Wyvill: for, bating no jot of heart or hope, he sets to work, with admirable courage and address, to repair his disaster; and (without any disparagement to the skill of Mr. Löwe, who, probably, relied too much on the superiority he had acquired) succeeds at last in wresting the victory from the very grasp of his opponent.

Turn we now to another table, at which are seated two celebrated champions—Herr Anderssen and M. Kieseritzski. In the composed and somewhat ascetic countenance of the former you may read a steady reliance on his own strength and resources that augurs well for his success; whilst the uneasy trepidation manifest in the manner of the latter seems almost to forestall defeat. In truth, Kieseritzski's miserable want of nerve rendered him wholly unfit for important match-play. This fatal defect in his chess organisation overshadowed him like an incubus,

paralysing his fine genius, and alone preventing him, in the opinion of many, from ranking as the first chess-player of his day. See what a ghastly blunder he has just made! One of his Rooks is posted so as to ward off a mate. The infatuated Livonian deliberately removes this piece—his only safeguard from destruction—and places it in such a position, that if he even escaped being checkmated, he must lose his Queen:—"a sort of double-barrelled blunder," as Mr. Staunton, in commenting on this *partie*, observes, "I hardly ever saw equalled, even among beginners at the game."

That pair of Knights, jousting near the entrance, are Herr Löwenthal and Mr. Williams. The slight figure, dark lineaments, and keen, intellectual expression of the far-famed Hungarian chess chief, contrast strongly with the burly form, light hair and eyes, and florid complexion of the English combatant: and no less different are their modes of doing battle. Herr Löwenthal amply merits the European reputation he has acquired. His profound and intimate knowledge of the openings—in which, perhaps, he has not a rival—enables him to develope his game with unerring rapidity and correctness; and he possesses a fertility of resource both in attack and defence, together with a subtlety of conception and quick mastery of position, which are seldom found united. Mr. Williams is a player of large calibre. Tardy in unfolding his plans, and cautious in the extreme, he nevertheless marshals his forces with such ability and

judgment, as to make them present a firm, compact front, within which no enemy finds it an easy matter to penetrate. His manœuvres are conducted with soundness and precision, he has great accuracy of calculation, and his constant practice gives him a command of the board equalled by few. But we are speaking of Mr. Williams in the present, when he (as well as Kieseritzski) belongs now to the shadowy past. He has succumbed to a mightier antagonist than Löwenthal—even "the fell serjeant," at whose hand we, who with uncertain steps wander still along the pathways of this nether world, must all in turn receive the grim checkmate, that will "end this strange eventful history," and terminate the mysterious Battle of Life.

For the encouragement of young players, we will round off this vague ramble of ours with a quotation from an ancient Persian chess manuscript, bequeathed to the Royal Asiatic Society by Major David Price:—"The glory of man, then, is knowledge; and chess is the nourishment of the mind, the solace of the spirit, the polisher of intelligence, the bright sun of understanding; and has been preferred by the philosopher, its inventor, to all other means by which we arrive at wisdom."

After that, who would not be a chess-player?

BUCKLE AS A CHESS PLAYER.

In a recent perusal of Mr. Buckle's *Miscellaneous and Posthumous Works*, I looked, with some curiosity, for any notice of his career as a chess-player, but found the information on this head of a very scanty description. There is a short biographical memoir prefixed to the work, in which a few *memoranda* of Mr. Buckle's personal character and habits are introduced by a friend of his, Miss Shirreff, who writes:—"But the first thing in which he manifested real power was chess, and that to so remarkable a degree that before he was twenty he had made a name in Europe by his playing. Through life it remained a great source of pleasure to him, and an afternoon devoted to it from time to time was the form of holiday he most often allowed himself." Miss Shirreff again tells us that:—"From the time he began to write, he never allowed himself to play a match at chess. One that he had played against the famous Löwenthal, and in which he won four games out of seven, took more out of him, he said, than he would give to any such frivolous triumph again." This statement is not quite correct. The match with Herr Löwenthal, referred to, was

played in 1851, when Buckle was in the full tide of literary composition. Nor was it the only chess match he undertook when he was vigorously toiling at the work which was subsequently to make him celebrated. There was a chess tournament at Ries' Divan in 1849, in which he contended, and carried off the first prize, vanquishing Messrs E. Williams, N. J. W. Tuckett, and J. R. Medley, in three successive matches. The *Chess Player's Chronicle*, by the way, in a preliminary notice of this tourney,* asserts that it was "not conducted by players of the highest class." The propounder of this singular *dictum* then gives a list of the combatants, which, besides that of Mr. Buckle, includes the names of Messrs. Williams, G. W. Medley, and Tuckett, to whom few, I imagine, would not then have conceded a front rank place in chess; and if Buckle was not a player of the highest class, I should be glad to know who in England could pretend to that designation? Miss Shirreff, however, is right in saying that he avoided match play as a rule, on account of the injurious consequences of the severe mental strain and bodily endurance which it involves must needs have entailed on a constitution never robust, at a time when the intellectual powers were kept on the full stretch in another direction.

Mr. Buckle, by almost unanimous consent of his contemporaries, was allowed to be a consummate

* Vol. X. pp. 65, 66.

master of chess-craft; but it is certain, that, for some reason or other, his best play did not always find its way into print. His published games, therefore, although many of them are of a high order of merit, do not, in my opinion, sustain the great reputation he had acquired, and unquestionably deserved. Nature had gifted him with a superlative aptitude for the game of chess, and he brought the powers of a rare intellect—clear, penetrating, and sagacious beyond that of most men—to bear upon it. His imagination was like that of the poet, "all compact," but still subservient to the dictates of a logical judgment. His combinations, accordingly, under such guidance, seldom, if ever, exhibited a flaw, being characterised by exactitude of calculation, and brilliant device. He excelled in pawn play, which he conducted with an ingenuity and deadly accuracy worthy of the renowned pawn general, Szen, himself. He gave large odds, such as rook and knight, with wonderful skill and success, appearing to have a sort of intuitive knowledge of a strange opponent's chess idiosyncracy, which enabled him precisely to guage the kind of risks he might venture to run. The rendering of heavy odds, as every experienced chess-player knows, necessitates hazardous and unsound play on the part of the giver. These contests of his at odds were always full of interest and entertainment to lookers on, and a gallery two or three deep often surrounded his board in the Strand Divan, where it was for years his

"custom in the afternoon," to recreate himself with his favourite game. I have occasionally seen the risible muscles of the spectators much exercised by the chap-fallen aspect of some poor discomfited rook player, who, with much care and solicitude, having built up, as he fondly believed, an impregnable position, had suddenly found his defences scattered like chaff, and himself accommodated with a mate, after the sacrifice, by his keen-witted opponent, of two or three pieces in succession.

When the London Committee of the Chess Tournament of 1851, was in course of formation, I was requested to ascertain from Mr. Buckle if he would become a member of it, and also take part in the approaching contests. I received from him in reply the following letter, in which, as will be seen, he expresses his resolution not to play. Subsequently, however, he modified this decision, and engaged in the match with Herr Löwenthal, to which allusion has been already made; one of a set appointed by the Committee, at the conclusion of the Tournament, to be contested by first-rate players:—

OXFORD TERRACE,
25th *November* (1850).

MY DEAR KENNEDY,

I am very willing to have my name on the Committee, if you think I can be of use, and when in Town shall be happy to attend its meetings; which, however, I shall be prevented doing on Saturday, as I intend going to Brighton on Wednesday, and shall not return till after Christmas. I am so constantly engaged in my work, that I have, reluctantly, resolved not to play at the Tournament, for I have had latterly one or two unpleasant symptoms, which

warn me that my brain is not made of iron, and that I cannot, with impunity, take too much out of myself.

May I beg you to have my name put down as a subscriber of ten pounds to the fund, which I will have paid to whoever may be appointed to receive the subscriptions. I shall be staying at Brighton, at my aunt's—Mrs. Ward's, 49, Sussex Square, Kemp Town—where, if you have occasion to write, you will, perhaps, be good enough to address me.

When you see Mr. Staunton, remember me kindly to him, and say how much I regret that I shall not have the opportunity of a friendly struggle with him; not that I am vain enough to suppose that such a struggle would be successful. Chess I have given up as a study, and, indeed, have not played ten games in the last five months.

Believe me, yours faithfully,

HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE.

If Buckle had entered the Tournament lists, and been pitted against Staunton, I think he would have proved victor, as the fine edge of Staunton's play was then taken off, a fact amply demonstrated in his matches with Anderssen and Williams. A contest, however, between the two masters, some years previous to this date, when Staunton was in his best form, would have terminated, I believe, in his favour. With all Buckle's superb genius for the game, he lacked something of the solid power, the unflagging patience, resource, and depth of Staunton, and in a set encounter with him, would, in my judgment, have had the worst of it.

Whether winning or losing, Mr. Buckle was a courteous and pleasant adversary, and sat quietly before the board, smoking his cigar, and pursuing his game with inflexible steadiness. He was sometimes harassed when at play by a nervous hiccough, which he would endeavour to suppress by humming some little air. He had

no love for music, however, but rather an aversion to it, which he did not affect to conceal, being the only fine chess player I have known who was "not moved by concord of sweet sounds." Fearing, probably, that the cultivation of chess might interfere with more important pursuits, for many years before his death he avoided the study of printed games, trying over positions, and making himself conversant with improvements and new variations in the openings. In his later published games, consequently, he almost invariably opens with the safe "giuoco piano," when he has the move, adopting an irregular debût as second player. It is so in his match with Herr Löwenthal. He systematically, in short, used chess simply as a *délassement* from graver mental labour. At one time, I have reason to think that he did not even possess a chess board. I had been dining with him at his house in Oxford Terrace, and asked him, after dinner, to look at a position in some game that interested me. After searching awhile, to my surprise and amusement, he produced an ancient little backgammon board, on which we set up a tall, shaky family of red and white bone chessmen, much too large for the board.

He took an interest in chess literature, as he did in literature of every kind. His voluminous commonplace book, about which I hope to say something hereafter, contains a large number of references to works in which chess and chess players are mentioned. The following extract from a letter, taken from the

memoir before alluded to, shows how strictly he forced himself to abstain from a pastime that yielded him so much enjoyment. No doubt on this occasion he went to his old resort, the Divan, to take his fill of chess, and seems to have rushed off to his beloved game with the glee of a school-boy escaping from his tasks to engage in a football match:—"19th Jan. 1857—Being somewhat deranged, if not altogether mad, at finding I had time to spare, I went out in the afternoon to enjoy myself, which I accomplished by playing chess for seven hours, and difficult games, too. I have not been so luxurious for four or five years, and feel all the better for it to-day."

Miss Shirreff remarks of the subject of this brief notice, that, at the time of his father's death, his whole acquirements consisted of little more than reading and writing English, and playing chess. The latter part of this statement is accurate, but my experience of Mr. Buckle is not in accordance with the former portion of it. I first knew him in June 1841, when he was nineteen years old, having lost his father a few months previously. He then played chess exceedingly well, so strongly, indeed, that I much doubt if the play of his maturity was anything in advance of that of his juvenile days. I remember, in that early time of our acquaintance, being struck by the bold originality and grasp of thought, the variety and extent of general knowledge possessed by the pale, delicate-looking stripling, who might have passed for a year or two younger than he really was.

He was an omnivorous reader, no book of any kind seeming to come amiss to him; and he had the power, accorded to few, of plucking out, as it were, the heart of a book, by doing little more than turning over the leaves, with here and there an occasional halt. I remember his borrowing of me *Burder's Oriental Literature*, a two volume octavo of anything but light reading. He brought it back the next day, whereon I remarked that I supposed it did not interest him. He said he had read it, and began to expatiate on its contents in a way which satisfied me that he, at any rate, knew more about them than I did.

His memory was singularly retentive, and kept fast hold of everything which had been once stamped on it in the course of reading or study. Hallam, the historian, whom I met at dinner at his house, told me that next to Macaulay, and Sir James Mackintosh, Buckle had the most tenacious memory, and amply stored mind of any man he had ever known. I was on one occasion in company with him when the subject of telling dramatic points was started by some one, who cited as an instance, the scene in the *Horace* of Corneille, in which the father of Horace is lamenting the disgrace brought upon him by his son, whom he erroneously supposes to have fled the field after the death of his two brothers, in the combat with the Curiaces. Julie asks: *Que vouliez-vous qu'il fit contre trois?* and the old man passionately thunders out, *Qu'il mourût!* Mr. Buckle agreed that this was very

fine, and immediately recited to us the whole scene, from its commencement, giving the dialogue with much spirit and effect.

At the period of which I am now writing, I resided at Brighton, and Mr. Buckle frequently came down there, to spend a week or a fortnight, when he would partially relax from work, and indulge himself with some chess, either at my house, or at the club. We had whist there of an evening, a game in which he excelled, and took great pleasure in, declaring that he thought he played it better than he did chess. I had then the honour to be President of the Brighton Chess Club, a fraternity of as genial a set of chess men as heart could desire to know. Many of those good fellows—most of them I fear—have queened their last pawns, and gone to the undiscovered country. We shall all follow, my little uncle, that is certain, whether we be first-rates, or lowly recipients of the rook. "At the end of the game," says an old Tuscan proverb, derived from chess, "the King and the Pawn both go into the bag."

Mr. Buckle's chess renown, brilliant as it was, paled before the distinction he acquired after the publication of the two opening volumes of his work on Civilisation, which placed him at once in the full blaze of public celebrity. Their composition, to my knowledge, had occupied his time and attention for about twenty years, and the completion of the book was the cherished hope of his life. *Dis aliter visum.* That hope, as we know, was not destined to be

realised. During the course of a tour in the East, his enfeebled constitution suddenly gave way, and "the silver cord" was "loosed." He breathed his last at Damascus, on May the 31st, 1862, and there is, to my mind, something inexpressibly touching in the words of bitter regret which were faltered out by the dying lips:—"My book, my book, I shall never finish my book!" Enough, however, had been accomplished to show what it would have been had the author survived to complete it, and the magnificent fragment will hand down to the future the name of Henry Thomas Buckle, as an eloquent, graceful, and powerful writer, as well as one of the most original and profound thinkers of the age in which he lived.

BUCKLE'S CHESS REFERENCES.

THE commonplace book of Mr. Buckle, which is printed in his *Miscellaneous and Posthumous Works*, contains a large number of references to chess, some of which I propose to quote, for the convenience of those readers of the *Westminster Papers* who take an interest in chess literature, and who may desire to consult them as opportunity or inclination shall serve. This commonplace book testifies to the extensive reading, and large research of its gifted compiler; but it must be confessed that he has not been so fortunate in an editor as Southey, the only writer, within my knowledge, whose commonplace book exceeds that of Buckle in copiousness and variety of matter. Southey's wonderful stores of accumulated learning, found in his son-in-law, the Rev. J. W. Warton, an able and sympathising arranger, to whom it was a labour of love to assort, classify, and group, each subject under its proper head, the vast mass of heterogeneous knowledge with which he had to deal. Buckle's editor, on the other hand, has thrown down, pell-mell before the per-

plexed reader, an immense amount of diversified and instructive matter, it is true, but without the slightest attempt having been made to methodise it. We are presented with a *rudis indigestaque moles*, the materials of which are most valuable, but which loses much of the useful interest it would possess, had time and trouble been given to sift its contents, and parcel them out in their respective order.

"It is impossible," writes Mr. Buckle, "to say when the game of chess was first brought into this kingdom, but we have good reason to suppose it to have been well known here at least a century anterior to the Conquest, and it was then a favourite pastime with persons of the highest rank. Canute the Dane, who ascended the throne of England A.D. 1017, was partial to the pastime. The following story is told of William Duke of Normandy, afterwards king of England. When a young man, he was invited to the court of the French King, and, during his residence there, being one day engaged at chess, with the king's eldest son, a dispute arose concerning the play, and William, exasperated at something his antagonist had said, struck him with the chess board, which obliged him to make a precipitate retreat from France, in order to avoid the consequence of so rash an action. (See *Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*.) A similar circumstance is said to have happened in England (this was between John, son of Henry II., and a Shropshire nobleman). (See *Leland Collect.*, Vol. I. p. 264.")

The Shropshire nobleman alluded to by Mr. Buckle, I may mention, was Fulk Fitzwarine, who was brought up in the household of King Henry II., as companion to his four sons, by all of whom he was much esteemed, excepting Prince John, with whom he was frequently at variance. It chanced one day that John and Fulk were playing at chess in a room by themselves, when John took up the board, and struck Fulk a blow on the head with it, on which Fulk raised his foot, and retaliated with a vehement kick in John's stomach, which made him tumble down insensible. Fulk, in his consternation, had recourse, we are told, to a singular remedy, he rubbed John's ear, which brought him to himself, whereupon the mean spirited *schelm* went off to his father, and laid his wrongs before him. Small comfort, however, did he receive from the sturdy old Plantagenet sire, who rated him in this fashion: "Hold your tongue, wretch! You are always quarrelling. If Fulk did anything but good to you, it must have been by your own desert." "He then," says the historian of the Fitzwarines, "called his master, and made him beat him finely and well for complaining."

"Come, we'll to chess or draughts" (*Middleton's Works*, 8vo. 1840, vol. ix. p 554). Ranken (*History of France*, vol. iv. p. 382), says, that an ordinance of St. Louis, in 1254, forbids chess-playing. On the origin of chess there are three papers in the *Archæologia* :—by Barrington (ix. 16-38), by Douce (xi. 397-400), by Madden (xxiv. 203-291). In Vol. xxiv. 204,

Madden has given a list of those writers who have treated chess historically. *Singer's Researches into the History of Playing Cards*, 1816, 4to, pp. 9, 10:—he thinks that chess and cards had a common origin. Gerbert, the famous Pope Sylvester II., died in A.D. 1003; he is the author of *un jeu de chiffres*, called *Rithmomachia*, of which Le Bœuf, who had seen it, says, "quil avoit beaucoup de resemblance avec le jeu des esches," (*Hist. Lit.* vi. 531, *Chalmers' Life of Ruddiman*, London, 1794, 8vo, p. 170). Philip V. of Spain, was fond of chess, but was not allowed to play it with Frenchmen! (*Mem de Louville*, 1818, ii. p. 141). The celebrated Ras at Chelicut, was passionately fond of chess—provided he won, (*See Salt's Voyage to Abyssinia*, 4to, 1814, p. 330. *Wodrow's Analecta*, iv. 152). Elizabeth gave Sir Charles Blount a "Queen at Chess in gold, richly enamelled," which he fastened to his arm with a crimson riband. This so offended Essex that a duel ensued, (*See Blount's Fragmenta Regalia in Harleian Miscellany*, edit. Park vol. ii. p. 102). Chess is mentioned as common in *Dekker's Knight's Conjuring* 1617, p. 32; Percy Society, Vol. v. In a closet in the old royal palace of Greenwich, Henry VIII. had "a payre of chess men in a case of black lether," (*Warton's Hist. of English Poetry*, 8vo, 1840, i. 203). Glanvill, who was himself a chess-player, speaks of it as impossible "that a blind man should manage a game of chess,"*

* Had Glanvill lived in the present day, and witnessed the blindfold feats of Morphy, Paulsen, Blackburne, and Zukertort, he would have held a different opinion.

(*Essais*, Paris, 8vo, 1843, livre iii. chap. x. p. 641). In 1740, Frederick the Great writes, "Je suis comme le roi d'echecs de Charles XII. qui marchait toujours," *Œuvres de Voltaire*, tome ii. p. 68). Wilberforce was a chess-player, (*Life by his son*, iv. 225). And so was Pitt, (*Pellew's Life of Lord Sidmouth*, ii. 385). Chess is played at Lhassa, and this game of the Tibetians, indeed of the Tartars generally, is exactly like ours, though that of the Chinese is different (*Huc's Travels in Tartary and Tibet*, vol. ii. p. 224-259). Dr. Bell, author of the celebrated system of education, was a chess-player, (See *Southey's Life of Bell*, vol. iii. p. 41). In *Biog. Univ.*, xxxiii. 294, it is said that Peter Pelisson was the best chess-player in France, in the reign of Henry IV.

Touching the last entry, one would like to know something more than his mere name, about this Peter Pelisson, who was France's champion in chess in the days of "King Henry of Navarre," the hero of one of Macaulay's heart-stirring ballads, whose warlike renown was eclipsed in his blood by the dagger of the fanatic Ravaillac. For aught we know to the contrary, Peter may have tilted at chess with the conqueror of Ivry himself, who is known to have cultivated the game; also with his prime minister, the astute Sully; perchance even with the good Admiral Coligny, whose hoary hair was "all dabbled with his blood" on the fatal eve of St. Bartholomew. Who shall say? Pelisson lives only in this insignificant record, the very shadow of a name, a

twinkling chess-star in the far off horizon of bygone days, *quia caret vate sacro*, because, unlike Macdonnell, he had no recording pen, such as that of Greenwood Walker, whom D'Arblay has dubbed

"The Boswell of the realms of Chess,"

to note his exploits on the chequered field; neither was he, like Steinitz, happy in a press, and electric telegraph, to give permanence to his renown, and flash his victories abroad over the earth.

There is, in *Blount's Fragmenta Antiquitatis*, a curious fact in connection with the game of chess, which I rather expected to find in Mr. Buckle's collection of references. In the reign of Edward III., the manor of Kingston Russell, in Dorset, was held for term of life, by Nichola, who was wife of Nicholas de Morteshore, of the feoffment of Sir William Russell, who held it in chief of the king by serjeanty, "to count or tell out the king's chess-men in his chamber, and to put them in a bag when the king should have finished his game:" *Ad narrand. familiam Saccii Regis et ponend. in loculo cum Rex ludum suum perfecerit.*

This bagging of chess-men, by the way, must have been a more agreeable office than the unsavoury one put upon a certain wight, Solomon Attefeld by name, on whom King John bestowed several lands at Kepperton and Atterton in Kent, the tenure being, that whenever the king should be pleased to cross the sea, the said Solomon, or his heirs, should go with him to hold his Majesty's head when he was afflicted with

sea-sickness; and it appears, from a record in the Tower, that this same service was actually performed in the reign of Edward I.

While the pen is in my hand, I should like to say a few words on a subject which I ventilated in *Notes and Queries* some months ago, when I wrote as follows:—

"It is, I believe, generally considered that there is only a single reference to the game of chess to be found in Shakspeare. I allude to *The Tempest*, act v., scene i., where Ferdinand and Miranda are discovered playing at chess. There is, however, a passage, *2 Henry VI.*, act iii., scene i., which appears to contain a distinct and unequivocal reference to the game:—

> "'And do not stand on quillets how to slay him
> Be it by gins, by snares, by subtlety,
> Sleeping or waking, 'tis no matter how,
> So he be dead, for that is good deceit
> Which mates him first that first intends deceit."

I do not see that any other construction can be put on the last line of the above passage than the one I have mentioned; I should nevertheless be obliged to you, Sir, or any Shakspearean contributor to *Notes and Queries*, who may be disposed to favour me with an opinion on the subject."

As the above appeal has hitherto brought no response, I place it before the readers of this journal, many of whom must be students of Shakspeare, and well conversant with his works, in the hope of eliciting

some opinion,* confirmatory or otherwise, of the view I have taken of the passage in question. The reticence of our great dramatist on the topic of chess has always been thoroughly unaccountable to me. Nearly all his brother playwrights mention it in their writings,† and if not a chess-player himself, he must surely often have seen it played, and been familiar with its nomenclature. Queen Elizabeth and James I., during whose reigns Shakspeare was born and died, were both amateurs and patrons of the game, which was then, and had been for several centuries before, a favourite recreation with the upper and middle classes of English society, by whom it was practised quite as much, if not more, than it is now. We can easily imagine, indeed, that, in the absence of newspapers and periodicals to while away their spare time, a total dearth of popular literature, and with few objects of intellectual interest, our ancestors must have cultivated chess as an exercise and occupation for their mental powers, as well as an agreeable indoors amusement. Accordingly we find a chess equipage or two nearly invariably recorded in the inventories of old houses which are still extant.

* Mr. E. Thorold, of Bath, kindly complied with the above request, and, in a letter in the *Westminster Papers*, Vol. VI., p. 157, conclusively proved, I think, that the passage in question has *no* reference to Chess.

† One of them, the well known dramatic author, Thomas Middleton, wrote a comedy, entitled *A Game at Chesse*, which was acted at Shakspeare's theatre, *The Globe*.

But there were neither chess clubs nor chess journalism in that olden period, and little, or no scientific knowledge of the game existed; the majority of the family of gambits, and the most interesting of the openings, with their numerous offshoots, being as yet in the womb of time. Kings, bishops, barons, knights, squires, and dames of high and low degree, stumbled through their openings, I imagine, for the most part, as best they might, and then fought their way to the end of the game with such skill and pluck as nature had given them. With us chess has almost acquired the position of a science, with our forefathers it was chiefly a pastime, but that it was highly prized, and extensively used, as a means of diverting the mind, and dispelling *ennui*, the history, literature, and records, both public and private, of those times sufficiently prove. The fact of there being so many as twenty-six English families who have chess-boards, and chess-rooks emblazoned on their arms, is incontrovertible evidence of the estimation in which the game was held

"In the brave days of old."

ALBANY FONBLANQUE AS A CHESS-PLAYER.

THE recently published *Life and Labours of Albany Fonblanque*, with the exception of a bare mention that he belonged to a Chess Club, makes no allusion to the very decided chess proclivities of that eminent writer, and "man of most excellent fancy." Having been a member, with Mr. Fonblanque, of the St. George's Chess Club for about thirty years, I was rather disappointed at not finding, in the book in question, some notice of his partiality for the noble pastime, which was certainly a feature of no small prominence in his character. Mr. Fonblanque was not what is termed "a book player," that is to say, the very considerable knowledge of chess which he possessed, was derived entirely from practice over the board, and not from the study of treatises and scientific works on the game. This he purposely eschewed, on the very proper ground that it would absorb too much of the time and attention he was obliged to devote to the higher pursuits of literature. Notwithstanding the advanced age to which he lived, his constitution was greatly below par, and his health

through life always delicate; and this, no doubt, was another reason for avoiding the extra pull on his brain power, which the acquisition of chess lore, by means of books, must have entailed on him. I have frequently heard him say that he never opened a book on chess in his life. Walter Scott, we know, resolutely gave up chess, of which he was very fond, when he was a young man, on account of the time its practice would involve. Fonblanque, whose work was not so multifarious as that of Scott, was able to enjoy his chess during the whole of a long life, without allowing it to encroach in any way on his more serious avocations. He was a rapid player, a good judge of position, and had a quick sight of the board, his game being characterized by brilliancy and dash, yet by no means deficient in good combination. He revelled in a thriving attack, which he would pursue with much animation, interspersing his moves with *badinage* and witty conceits, provocative of laughter, not only in his antagonist, but sometimes eliciting roars from all the other tables in the room. I am alluding now to those palmy days when the St. George's Club held its meetings in Cavendish Square. Among the *habitués* were the Bishop of Rochester, Lord Cremorne,* Hon. H. T. Liddell,† Messrs. Benjamin Smith, Milnes Gaskell, Brooke Greville, M. Wyvill, M.P., C. R. Talbot, M.P., Sir Charles Marshall, Mr. Staunton, and other staunch adherents of the game, some

* Now Earl of Dartrey. † Now Earl of Ravensworth.

of whom have departed this life, but many, I am glad to say, still survive,

> "To witch the world with noble *chess*manship."

There I remember to have witnessed a stout conflict betweeen Mr. Cochrane (may his shadow never be less!), then at home on a flying visit from India, and St. Amant, the chivalrous chess paladin of Gaul, on which occasion I can assure you that Mr. Cochrane was not found, like the man in *Don Juan*,

> "Exclaiming to his nearest follower, or henchman,
> Oh! Jack, I'm floor'd by that 'ere *gallus* Frenchman."

In those rooms, was held that famous passage of arms, *cujus pars parva fui*, the Tournament of 1851, precursor of the various International chess assemblages which have since taken place. This meeting gave rise, at the time, to a considerable amount of angry and bitter feeling, which has long ago died out, but it effected an important benefit to the cause of chess, in having originated the bringing together of chess-players of different countries, and of affording them opportunity to fraternise, and test their various styles of play, and degrees of skill, by actual conflict over the board. I have no doubt that the increase of popularity, and extension of practice, which the game has, of late years, unquestionably enjoyed, is partly attributable to the influence, direct as well as indirect, exercised by these interesting gatherings. This result I predicted in a letter on the subject of the first London Tournament, which was printed in

the *Illustrated London News*, in October 1850, and subsequently in the *Chess Players' Chronicle*.* The St. George's Chess Club, as everybody knows, has for many years been established in King Street, St. James's, where, thanks to the unwearied care for its interests displayed by the urbane Hon. Secretary, my friend, Mr. T. I. Hampton, it goes on its way prosperous and rejoicing.†

I remember a witticism of Fonblanque's, in the old Cavendish Square time, which tickled us all very much. There was an ancient gentleman, almost a nonogenarian, a member of the Club, who being past play himself, was fain to be content with looking over the play of others, from which he derived much solace and comfort. This veteran, being almost in the case of old Gobbo, "sand blind, high gravel blind," when he desired to inspect a game, would seat himself by one of the players, and, depositing his weight upon the unhappy man, dip his head down over the pieces, with a running comment of mutterings to himself, such as—"Umph! ay, ay—bless my heart!—he goes there, does he!—ay, ay—why does he do that now?" Neither did he scruple, when, by

* Vol xi., p. 347.

† Since the above was written, Mr. Hampton, I grieve to say, has left us, and "gone to the majority." To a cultivated intellect, he united a benevolent disposition, which won for him universal regard; and, after a personal friendship of more than twenty years, I can truly pronounce him to have been

"E'en as just a man,
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal."

reason of his infirmity, unable to recognize a piece, to seize and feel it, in order to ascertain what it was. On one occasion, after he had victimized somebody in this way, and been led off by his servant, who always came for him at a certain hour, Mr. Fonblanque remarked, "Mr. —— is a chess-coroner, he not only holds an inquest on the game, but sits upon the body!" It should be added that the old gentleman was much liked and respected in the Club, and no one ever thought of taking exception to his mode of overlooking a game, inconvenient as it sometimes was.

I have said that Mr. Fonblanque was a fast chess-player, and that he never cultivated, or sought to improve, his knowledge of the game by means of books; and that, notwithstanding this drawback, he was an amateur of much skill, his strength being, I suppose, about Pawn and two moves below that of a first-rate practitioner. This proves that he was endowed with a strong natural capacity for the game, because quick play must often of necessity be faulty, and book training of some kind, or, at all events, a course of superior professional tuition, is highly desirable, as the foundation on which the superstructure on which a really sound and practical acquaintance with chess should be built.

In notable contrast with the rapidity of his chess, was Fonblanque's deliberate method of writing. The racy anecdotes, and epigrammatic turns of thought, the incomparable humour, and brilliant wit, that

sparkled and shone in his *Examiner* articles, were placed in their setting with scrupulous care. His shafts of biting sarcasm, and withering invective, were heedfully polished and pointed, and the links of cogent reasoning, and powerful argument, hammered and riveted in the workshop of his brain, with the most elaborate forethought. In his early days, it is said that he frequently wrote an article ten times over before he was satisfied with it, and, after reading it in print, would declare that there were still things which he should like to alter. We are told, also, that "he expended himself much in phrase, polishing and hardening, with much, and often obvious, labour." It seems clear, then, that if he had chosen to apply himself to the severe study of chess, he would have won its highest honours, barren though they may be considered by some; just as his native genius, combined with sedulous hard work, obtained for him the substantial prizes of life, as well as the splendid reputation he so long enjoyed, of being without a rival in the field of political literature.

Fonblanque, like Buckle, was extremely partial to Brighton, the invigorating breezes of which he always found bracing and recruiting to his nerves and general health. During the period of my residence there, between the years 1840 and 1850, many were the visits which he paid to London-super-Mare, where his tall, attenuated figure, and colourless, but keenly intellectual face, were well-known on cliff and esplanade. He was often to be seen on horseback, and

greatly enjoyed a gallop over the Downs. He was a constant visitor at the chess club of an afternoon, and frequently attended the whist *séances* there in the evening. Whist, indeed, was second in his affections to chess when I first knew him; in earlier days it held the first place. So far back as 1820 he writes from Brighton: "My business here is whist; if I cannot get whist—and Providence is very good to me, and seldom denies me its rubbers—I resort to piquet, if piquet is not to be had, to *écarté*."

The Brighton Chess Club, which I had founded in the beginning of the afore-mentioned decade, was then in the full swing of a vigorous existence, and a favourite arena and lounge of the London players, who came to take their ease in Brighton, and of provincial amateurs from all parts of England. The club-room was simply a hole in the cliff, over against the Chain Pier; its site, I believe, now forms part of the Aquarium. Matches of every kind were constantly going forward. One between Herren Horwitz and Harrwitz, I remember, evoked particular attention, from the high repute of the two combatants. After a close hand-to-hand fight, to the surprise of most people, it was won by Harrwitz, who possessed more nerve for match-play than his accomplished, but excitable opponent, and succeeded in scoring six games to Horwitz's four. To this resort, many a time and oft, came Staunton, then at the top of his chess strength, and wearing the laurels he had recently acquired in his match with the redoubtable

St. Amant; and here numbers of his famous "pawn and two" games were contested. He gave these difficult odds with equal judgment, power of resource, and tenacity of purpose; and with wonderful success, if we consider the strength of the players to whom they were yielded, including such athletes as Captain Evans, Herr Harrwitz, Messrs. Mongredien, Medley, Spreckley, Stanley (of New York), E. Williams, Zytogorski, and others. I believe that some of Staunton's best play will be found in these encounters.

Aristoteles quidem ait, says Cicero, *omnes ingeniosos melancholicos esse;* and to this rule Fonblanque was no exception. His temperament was by nature sombre, and he was peculiarly liable to those hours of depression, which, like clouds above a summer sea, at times overshadow and darken the mind. Chess, also, while it ministered food to his wit, acted as a varnish to his little irritabilities, as it does to those of us all. He had his whims and caprices, to which he gave vent, sometimes in a tone of mock pathos irresistibly humourous. I have known him express antipathy to a man because he disliked the shape of his hat, and he would justify his aversion by all manner of jocular reasons. In such moods he used to remind me of an epigram of Martial,* which has been thus Englished:—

"In all thy humours, whether grave or mellow,
Thou'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow,
Hast so much wit, and mirth, and spleen about thee,
That there's no living with thee, nor without thee."

* "Difficilis, facilis, jucundus, acerbus es idem,
Nec tecum possum vivere, nec sine te."—*Epig.* xii., 37.

These humours, however, were like the roughness of the pine-apple rind; below them lay the rich fruit of "a constant, noble, loving nature." He was stainless in honour and honesty. Faithful to his political convictions, he maintained them with all the vigour of his powerful pen, through good and evil report, with unshrinking firmness through life. His nephew, who edits the *Life and Labours*, referring to the esteem in which he was held by those who enjoyed his intimacy, writes thus:—"Partly from ill health, but more from constitutional reserve, Fonblanque was averse to general society, and never had or coveted a large circle of acquaintances. To compensate for this, however, he had many warm and attached friends. A friendship once formed by him was strong and enduring; and the letters which I have found in his possession, bear remarkable testimony to his faculty of inspiring affection and confidence in those whom he liked and admired."

A FASCICULUS OF CHESS WRINKLES.

"These few precepts in thy memory,
Look thou character."—*Hamlet.*

I.

When you have lost a game or games, never be guilty of the preposterous silliness of allowing that you are fairly mastered by the more expert skill of your antagonist. There are many ways of accounting for such a mishap, without having occasion to resort to an admission so humiliating to your self-esteem. You may conjure up a bad headache for the nonce. You have been in weak health lately. Your mind was otherwise occupied. You wanted sufficient excitement—a capital excuse, as it implies your opponent's force being so inferior to your own, that you could not muster interest enough to take the trouble to beat him. Lastly, you may roundly asseverate that your bad success has been owing sheerly to *luck*—a reason I do not hear put forward so frequently as it ought to be. Many people are so foolish as to imagine that there is little or no good or bad fortune on the chess board, but that is a great mistake.

II.

Again, when perchance a loser, you may murmur softly within your beard, but still plainly enough for your adversary to hear,—

> "I am not valiant neither,
> But every puny whipster gets my sword."

Or, if you suppose the above quotation may be *caviare* to the un-Shakspearean intellect of your victor, say gently, yet regretfully, as if your mind were haunted by visions of former conquests,—"Ay, ay, every muff in the club thinks he can beat me now."

III.

If of a musical turn, you are not forbidden—of course involuntarily, and in mere cheerfulness of heart—to hum or sing during a game, snatches of your familiar and favourite airs, accompanying the same by a *staccato* digital tattoo on the table. When it is your adversary's turn to move, you may at pleasure yawn, sneeze, groan, stretch yourself, use your pocket-handkerchief vigorously, get up from your chair and sit down again, and make frequent inspection of your watch. These unsophisticated little arts will, in all probability, by distracting the attention of your opponent, confuse and cause him to hurry his move, and thus you may cleverly effect a diversion in your own favour.

IV.

When engaged in a *partie* with a young and nervous player, yourself being an old and experienced hand, be at no pains to conceal your contempt for his small proficiency in the game. This you can easily manifest by entering, with an unconcerned air, into off-hand conversations with by-standers, affecting to take huge interest in a neighbouring game, reading a newspaper, or making ironical remarks when your antagonist has effected a move, such as, "Oho! the gentleman goes there, does he." "Very good, indeed." "You are a perfect Philidor, sir." "Oho!" By these means you will at once indisputably establish your adversary's littleness, and your own vast superiority and condescension.

V.

If danger menaces you on the right side of the board, pore earnestly over the left flank, placing an occasional finger on a vacant square, to draw off your adversary's attention. If he be a young hand, and is left with Queen against a Bishop, confidently assure him that Staunton, Lewis, and Walker all combine in pronouncing this to be a draw. Many players wisely proclaim, *ore rotundo*, all endings of games that run against them as "drawn by force," and dexterously reiterate the assertion until their stupid antagonist, fearing lest he betray ignorance by prolonging the contest any farther, consents to a *remise*.

VI.

"How very badly I am playing to-day!" or something to that effect, is a pet expression which almost invariably escapes from every losing player (myself included), and a very excellent one it is. For, you see, by this brief sentence you delicately convey to your antagonist, that he need not in the least plume himself on his present success, which is merely temporary, and owing to your having played below your usual standard, but not by any means to his superior skill. You may so regulate your manner, also, that if he be not a very dull fellow indeed, he will not fail to perceive your settled conviction that you are able to beat him into a jelly, whenever you choose to pay the necessary attention.

VII.

Although you may esteem it perfectly legitimate and proper for yourself, when a loser, to lament that you are "playing badly," should your opponent attempt the same plea in similar circumstances, reply promptly that you cannot allow him so to disparage his own skill; that he has played exceedingly well, but that you have played *better*.

VIII.

Should it strike you that the constitution of your game is in a shaky state, and likely soon to break up, abruptly draw out your watch, and declare, with an

appearance of much vexation, that you have a pressing engagement at a certain hour, and that you must incontinently go, as your time is up. Your antagonist may probably hint that your game is up, as well as your time, in which case indignantly assert, (without particularising on which side) that you distinctly see checkmate in a few moves, and then, staying no longer question, make yourself scarce.

IX.

If your opponent moves on the tortoise, or slow principle, it is lawful for you to endeavour to quicken his motions by feigning to drop asleep, and wake again with a terrific snore. Or you may get up and attitudinize ancient statues before the fire, telling him with a yawn, to call you when he has moved.

X.

If you happen to be overlooking two players who are greatly superior to yourself, do not on that account be deterred from making whatever comments on their play you may think fit. A looker-on, you know, proverbially sees more of the game than those who are engaged in it. Should any move, therefore, strike you as being bad, instantly point it out, and in a mild yet decided manner, give your reasons for considering it defective. You must be prepared to find that many will regard this friendly *surveillance* in the light of impertinent interference, and be terribly galled and

irritated, nay, thrown quite off the balance of their play by it; possibly enough inwardly consigning their self-constituted monitor and his advice to the shades below. But even their forgetting themselves so far as openly to send you to Tartarus, cannot alter your indefeasible right as an Englishman, to pass your free and uncontrolled opinion on any subject you think proper.

XI.

Should you be doing players of a smaller calibre than yourself the favour to inspect their game, criticise every move without the least hesitation or reserve, illustrating your remarks by manipulation of the pieces, as well as by stringent animadversion on everything that, in your opinion, approaches blundering play. Your strictures will, doubtless, be received with all due humility by the rebuked and disconcerted tyros, and yourself elevated to a state of honour and glory thereby.

XII.

In the moment of victory, fail not, I beseech you, to make your foiled "opposite" quaff largely of the bitter cup of defeat. This you will do, not for your own gratification, but rather because you ought to consider it a paramount and conscientious duty, to endeavour at all times to impress upon your fellow-man the truthful moral that "sweet are the uses of adversity." Fall back in your chair, then, and regard your vanquished adversary with an easy air of laugh-

ing triumph; talking while you do so, as if it were a matter of course that you should have beaten him. After this, "quenching your familiar smile with an austere regard of control," proceed to point out, as lengthily as you can, that his opening was bad, his method of attack altogether unsound, and that, after a certain move, the ruinous consequences of which you are astonished he did not foresee, his game was irretrievable. Conclude by hinting that *perhaps* you could afford to render him some odds. Should he wince at all under this wholesome discipline, and attempt a blustering reply, hear him in silence, letting your countenance simply assume a Pecksniffian smile of commiserating pity:—it becomes you to make every compatible allowance for the mortified feelings of a beaten enemy, reflecting, as you must do, that you yourself cannot always expect to win.

XIII.

When you see clearly that your game is past all redemption lost, advisedly put your Queen, or some other piece *en prise;* and when it has been taken, after a quick exclamation of surprise and sorrow, begin to replace the men for another *partie,* observing with an air of tranquil resignation, that *that* is the way you lose all your games.

XIV.

Take opportunity, when you can, to inveigle some famous player—Mr. Gambit Pawn for instance—into

an even game with you—"in a merry sport," as it were. It is very likely that, being overweeningly conscious of his superiority, as such celebrities generally are, he will play carelessly, and you may win. If you do, take precious care not to play with him any more, but go up and down the town, proclaiming your achievement everywhere with trumpet tongue. Whenever Mr. Gambit Pawn's name is afterwards mentioned in your presence, lose no time in making the company aware that you won every game you ever played with him, and received no odds. Your reputation, as a strong player, will thus be honourably advanced, while your character for strict veracity must remain unimpeached.

By adhering steadily to the hints I have thrown out above, imperfect as I am fully sensible they are, I think I can promise that their practice will, in a short time, obtain for you a reputation of no ordinary kind in the chess circles you frequent; and in due season, you may even aspire to exhibit yourself in as amiable colours as one of the persons in the following:—

SCENE IN RIES'S DIVAN.

MR. WHITE. MR. BLACK. BYSTANDER.
SIMPSON, *the Waiter.*

MR. WHITE *and* MR. BLACK *are engaged in playing a game of Chess.*

MR. BLACK. Simpson, my worthy fellow, a cigar if you please.

SIMPSON. A cigar, sir? Yes, sir.

MR. BLACK. I think your last move was decidedly weak, and yet you took time enough to it in all conscience. I shall give a check.

MR. WHITE (*pondering*). That's a little awkward.

MR. BLACK. Yes: you present just now, my dear sir, a spectacle which the gods themselves behold with approval—a good man struggling with difficulty.

MR. WHITE. My position is rather a cramped one, certainly, but I can't see anything bad in it. I shall soon be able to liberate my pieces, I imagine.

MR. BLACK. *I* should call it an everlasting fix; but that's a mere matter of opinion. What a pretty game

chess is! It's rather an interesting combination this—

(*Sings*) "I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls."

BYSTANDER (*to* MR. BLACK). Will you oblige me with a light to my cigar, sir?

MR. BLACK. With the greatest pleasure. Allow me to knock off the ash first.

MR. WHITE. Well, I go there with my Knight.

MR. BLACK (*puffing a volume of smoke over the board*). He goes there with his Knight! Excellent! The gentleman is becoming desperate! I believe, though, you will soon be a dead man. Hum—hum—surely I have got a mate.

(*Sings*) "That you loved me still the same,
You loved me, you loved me sti ——"

(*Perpetrating a roulade not to be found in Balfe's score*)
"——ill the same."

I declare the gentleman is positively getting up a small counter-attack of his own, but I shall double my Rooks notwithstanding. We're not to be frightened by straws in that fashion.

MR. WHITE. Check!

MR. BLACK (*after a pause of dismay*). By Jove, what's this? Why I must lose my Queen, or be mated in two moves. Ass! dolt! beast that I was not to have seen it! And yet I did see it, and forgot it again. To have thrown away such a game by sheer carelessness!

MR. WHITE. Excuse me, but I really cannot see that you had a good game.

MR. BLACK. Not good? That Rook's Pawn pushed one square would have given me a dead win. It's really too infamous. You have the greatest luck of any man I ever played with. Not good, indeed!

MR. WHITE. Nay, the Rook's Pawn one would have availed you nothing, for, in reply, I check with Knight, and mate next move with Queen.

MR. BLACK. It's very extraordinary; I am quite certain that I am a very much stronger player than you are, and yet I always let you win of me. I *must* force myself to take more pains.

MR. WHITE (*smiling*). Well, I won't dispute about who is the strongest player, so long as you allow me to score a majority of games.

SIMPSON (*to* MR. BLACK). Did you order two teas, sir?

MR. BLACK (*savagely*). Confound you—no! Get away!

SIMPSON. Beg pardon, sir. Didn't mean for to *teaze* you.

[SIMPSON, *who evidently knows his man, departs grinning.*

BYSTANDER (*to* MR. BLACK). May I trouble you for another light to my cigar, sir?

MR. BLACK. No, sir; Light your cigar elsewhere, sir. You ought never to interrupt a game by speak-

ing, sir. I have played shamefully to-day. I've a great mind to give up chess.

BYSTANDER. That is a resolution, sir, which you will pardon my recommending you to adhere to, at all events, until you have learned to keep your temper a little more under control, than you seem able to do at present.

[*An approving laugh from the gallery, which disperses to other tables.*

A FATAL REMEMBRANCE.

I WAS subaltern of the cantonment main-guard at Bangalore, one day in the month of June, 183—. Tattoo had just beaten; and I was sitting in the guard-room with my friend, Frederick Gahagan, the senior lieutenant in the regiment to which I belonged, and manager of the amateur theatre of the station.

Gahagan was a rattling, care-for-nothing Irishman, whose chief characteristic was a strong propensity for theatricals and practical jokes; but withal a generous, warm-hearted fellow, and as gallant a soldier as ever buckled swordbelt. In his capacity of manager, he was at present in a state of considerable perplexity, the occasion whereof was this.

There chanced then to be on a visit at Bangalore a particular ally of Fred's, who was leading tragedian of the Chowringhee theatre in Calcutta; and it was in contemplation to get up *Macbeth*, in order that the aforesaid star might exhibit in his crack part as the hero of that great tragedy. Fred was to play Macduff; and the "blood-boltered Banquo" was consigned to my charge. The other parts were

tolerably well cast, with the exception of that of Lady Macbeth, which, indeed, was not cast at all; seeing that no representative could be found for it. It must be stated that, as we had no actresses amongst us, all our female characters, as in the times of the primitive drama, were necessarily performed by gentlemen. Now, in general it was not difficult to command a supply of smooth-faced young ensigns to personate the heroines, waiting-maids, and old women of the comedies and farces, to which our performances had been hitherto restricted. But Lady Macbeth was a very different sort of person to Caroline Dormer and Mrs. Hardcastle; and our *ladies* accordingly, one and all, struck work; refusing, point blank, to have anything to say to her.

The unfortunate manager, who had set his heart upon getting up the piece, was at his wits' end, and had bent his footsteps towards the main-guard, to advise with me as to what should be done in this untoward emergency. I endeavoured to console him as well as I could; and suggested that, if the worst came to the worst, the part might be read. But, lugubriously shaking his *caput*, Fred declared that would never do; so, after discussing half-a-dozen Trichinopoly cheroots, with a proportionate quantity of brandy *pani*, he departed for his quarters; "disgusted," as he said, "with the ingratitude of mankind," whilst I set forth to go my grand rounds.

Next morning, having been relieved from guard, I had returned home, and was taking my ease in

my camp chair, luxuriously whiffing away at my after-breakfast cheroot, when who should step gingerly into the room but Manager Fred Gahagan. The clouds of the previous evening had entirely disappeared from his ingenuous countenance, which was puckered up in the most insinuating manner, with what I was wont to call his "borrowing smile;" for Fred was oftentimes afflicted with impecuniosity—a complaint common enough amongst us subs.—and when the fit was on him, in the spirit of true friendship, he generally contrived to disburthen me of the few remaining rupees that constituted the balance of my last month's pay.

Fred brought himself to an anchor upon a bullock-trunk, and, after my boy had handed him a cheroot, and he had disgorged a few puffs of smoke, thus delivered himself:—

"This is a capital weed, Wilmot. I don't know how it is, but you always manage to have the best tobacco in the cantonment."

"Hem," said I, drily. "Glad you like it."

"I say, Peter, my dear fellow," quoth he, "Fitzgerald, Grimes, and I, have just been talking over what we were discussing last night, about Lady Macbeth, you know."

"Yes," said I, somewhat relieved to find the conversation was not taking the turn I dreaded.

"Well, sir," continued Fred, plunging at once *in medias res*, and speaking very fast, "and we have come to the conclusion that you are the

only person to relieve us from all difficulty on the subject. Fitzgerald will take your part of Banquo; and you shall have Lady Macbeth, a character for which every one agrees you are admirably fitted."

"I play Lady Macbeth!" cried I, "with my scrubbing-brush of a beard, and whiskers like a prickly-pear hedge! Why you must be all mad to think of such a thing."

"My dear friend," remarked Gahagan mildly, "you know I have always said that you had the Kemble eye and nose; and I'm sure you won't hesitate about cutting off your whiskers, when so much depends upon it: they'll soon grow again, you know, Peter: as for your dark chin, that don't matter a rush, as Lady Macbeth is a dark woman."

The reader will agree with me in thinking that friendship can sometimes be as blind as love, when I say with respect to my "Kemble eye and nose," that the former has been from childhood affected with a decided tendency to obliquity; and the latter bears a considerably stronger resemblance to a pump-handle, than it does to the classic profile of John Kemble, or any of his family.

"Lieutenant Gahagan," said I, solemnly, "do you remember how, some six years ago at Hydrabad, when yet beardless and whiskerless, the only hair upon my face being eyebrows and eyelashes, at your instigation and *suadente diabolo*, I attempted to perform Lydia Languish in 'The Rivals?' and hast thou

yet forgotten, O! son of an unsainted father, how my grenadier stride, the fixed tea-pot position of my arms, to say nothing of the numerous other solecisms in the code of female manners which I perpetrated on that occasion, made me a laughing-stock and a by-word for many a long day afterwards? All this, I say, must be fresh in your recollection; and yet you have the audacity to ask me to expose myself again in a similar manner!"

"Pooh, pooh?" laughed Gahagan, "you were only a boy then; now you have more experience in these matters: besides, Lydia Languish was a part quite unworthy of your powers; Lady Macbeth is a mare of another colour."

"Why, man, with what face could I aver that

> 'I have given suck and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me?'

That would certainly draw tears from the audience; but they would be tears of laughter, not sympathy, I warrant you. No, no, good Master Fred, it won't do, I tell you; and, in the words of Lady Macbeth herself, I say,—

> 'What beast was't then,
> That made you break this enterprise to me?'

And now oblige me by walking your body off, for I have got my yesterday's guard report to fill up and send in; in default of which I shall be sure to catch an 'official' from the Brigade-major."

But Fred not only did not walk his body off, but harping on the same string, pertinaciously continued to ply me with alternate arguments and intreaties, until at last, fairly wearied out, and more, I believe, with the hope of getting rid of the "importunate chink" of the fellow's discourse, than anything else, in an evil moment I consented!—hear it not, shade of Mrs. Siddons!—to denude myself of the bushy honours of my cheeks, and tread the boards of the Bangalore stage as the wife of that atrocious usurper, "King, Cawdor, Glamis!"

Fred marched himself away, elated at having carried his point; and I, after sundry dubious misgivings anent the rash promise I had made, ended by casting all compunctious visitings to the winds, and doughtily resolved, as I was in for the business, to "screw my courage to the sticking-place," and go through with it as boldly as I might.

By dint of continually studying my *rôle*, my dislike to it gradually diminished; nay, at length was converted into positive enthusiasm. I became convinced that I should make a decided hit, and cover my temples with unfading laurel. I rehearsed at all times, seasons, and places, until I was a perfect nuisance to everybody; and my acquaintance, I am sure, to a man, wished both me and her bloodthirsty ladyship, deeper than plummet ever sounded, at the bottom of the sea. Even the brute creation did not escape the annoyance. One morning my English pointer, "Spot," ran yelping out of the

room, panic-stricken by the vehement manner with which I exclaimed, "Out, damned *spot!* out, I say!" and with the full conviction, which the animal probably entertained to the day of his death, that the said anathema had personal reference to himself.

The evening big with my fate at last arrived. The house was crammed, expectation on tiptoe, and the play commenced. The first four acts went off swimmingly; my performance especially was applauded to the echo; and there only wanted the celebrated sleeping scene, in which I flattered myself to be particularly strong, to complete my triumph. Triumph, did I say?

I must here explain, for the benefit of those who have never rounded the Cape, that the extreme heat of an Indian climate is so favourable to the growth of hair, as to put those wights who are afflicted with dark *chevelures*, which was my case, to the inconvenient necessity of chin-scraping twice on the same day, when they wish to appear particularly spruce of an evening. Now, I intended to have shaved before the play began, but in the hurry of dressing had forgotten all about it; and, upon inspecting my visage in a glass, after I had donned Lady Macbeth's night-gear, the lower part of it appeared so swart in contrast with the white dress, that I found it would be absolutely necessary to pass a razor over it before going on with my part.

The night was excessively warm, even for India; and as the place allotted to us for dressing was very

small and confined, the bright thought struck me, that I should have more air and room on the stage, whither I accordingly directed my servant to follow me with the shaving apparatus.

I ensconced myself behind the drop-scene, which was down, and was in the act of commencing the tonsorial operation, when, *horresco referens!* the prompter's bell rang sharply, whether by accident or design I was never able to ascertain, but have grievous suspicions that Fred Gahagan knew something about it—up flew the drop-scene like a shot, and discovered the following *tableau vivant* to the astounded audience:—

Myself, Lady Macbeth, with legs nearly a yard asunder—face and throat outstretched and covered with a plentiful white lather—right arm brandishing aloft one of Paget's best razors, and left thumb and forefinger grasping my nose. In front of me stood my faithful Hindoo valet, Verasawmy by name, with a soap-box in one hand; while his other held up to his master's gaze a small looking-glass, over the top of which his black face, surmounted by a red turban, was peering at me with grave and earnest attention.

A wondering pause of a few seconds prevailed, and then one loud, rending, and continuous peal of laughter and screams shook the universal house.

As if smitten with sudden catalepsy, I was without power to move a single muscle of my body, and for the space of two minutes remained in a stupor

in the same attitude—immovable, rooted, frozen to the spot where I stood. At length, recovering at once my senses and power of motion, I bounded like a maniac from the stage, pursued by the convulsive roars of the spectators, and upsetting, in my retreat, the unlucky Verasawmy, who rolled down to the footlights, doubled up, and in a paroxysm of terror and dismay.

Lieutenant Fred Gahagan had good reason to bless his stars that, in that moment of frenzy, I did not encounter him—the detestable origin of the abomination that had just been heaped upon my head. I am no two-legged creature if I should not have sacrificed him on the spot with my razor, and so merited the gratitude of his regimental juniors by giving them a step.

I have never since, either in public or private life, appeared in petticoats again.

FRED GAHAGAN AND HIS COFFIN.

You may perhaps remember that I lately narrated how a very scurvy indignity was put upon me, Peter Wilmot, Lieutenant in the 54th Regiment M.N.I., by exposing me in the suds to the laughter and derision of a crowded theatre. The author and contriver of this "peculiarly perplexing position," I had too good reason to believe, was a gentleman who never hesitated between his friend and his joke, videlicet, the ne'er-do-weel Fred Gahagan; and as it was an affront I could not altogether pouch up, I resolved to wait patiently until the "whirligig of time should bring about his revenges," by enabling me to pay off the youth in his own coin.

An opportunity of effecting this did not occur for a year afterwards, during which interval our corps had marched from Bangalore for the garrison of Masulipatam, and I had been appointed Adjutant of the regiment.

Masulipatam was at that time very unhealthy, on account of an epidemic intermittent fever, which carried off great numbers of the officers and men

of the different regiments stationed there. Amcngst the rest, the 54th did not escape; for besides losing several men within two days, we "expended" our Lieutenant-colonel, Major, and a subaltern.

Fred Gahagan, who had never been ill in his life before, was laid on his beam-ends by a severe attack of this rascally malady, and shaved, blistered, and physicked after the most approved fashion. The usual remedial appliances, however, proved ineffectual to stay the progress of the disorder, and in a few days poor Gahagan was pronounced by a conclave of doctors to be "bespoke." We were all much grieved at this intelligence, for Fred was a favourite with everybody; as for me, notwithstanding the ill-conditioned tricks he now and then played me, I loved the fellow as the apple of my eye, and as far as my regimental duties would permit, had been with him constantly from the commencement of his illness.

One evening, after he had been delirious for two days, I met our Assistant-surgeon coming out of the sick-room, who told me, with a melancholy shake of his head, that in all probability poor Fred would not last through the night. "He has been calling for beer," added the kind-hearted pill: "you may give him some if you like; for it don't matter what he takes now, poor boy!"

I entered the bedroom with a heavy heart. The delirium had left him; my poor friend knew me, and seemed quite composed and tranquil. "Can I do anything for you, my dear fellow?" said I, with a

husky voice, bending down to catch his reply. "Peter," he muttered feebly, "give me some beer." I made a sign to his servant, who was blubbering in a corner of the room, to bring a bottle, from which I poured out a large glassful, and, supporting the sick man with one arm, with the other held the liquid to his lips. He swallowed every drop of it, and sank back again on his pillow. I wrapped him up carefully with a couple of blankets, and he soon fell asleep, breathing fully and regularly.

Next morning the astonished doctor, when he made his appearance, found his patient, instead of being "a moist, damp, unpleasant body," as Mr. Mantalini has it, in a calm slumber, and covered from head to foot with a warm perspiration. In three weeks, with the exception of a bald pate, and a slight emaciation of his muscular frame, Fred Gahagan was himself again, and ready for all his old mischief.*

Every person has his or her peculiar dislikes. Shylock says,—

> "Some men there are love not a gaping pig,
> Some that are mad if they behold a cat."

Now Fred Gahagan's mortal antipathy was a coffin; by some kink in his moral idiosyncrasy he could not abide to look on one, or even to hear the word mentioned in his presence; and I have known this man,

* *Le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable.*—The above incident is fact.

who would have walked up to the gun-muzzles of an enemy's battery without winking an eye-lid, turn pale and tremble when giving the word of command to his men at a funeral party.

It was upon this gentle weakness of Frederick's that I resolved to act; and, in order to give effect to my design, took into my confidence one to whom the thing was a labour of love. My confederate was a little squab Mussulman, called Sheik Yusuf, with small black eyes, whose restless twinkle indicated much humour and intelligence. He rejoiced in a mouth of such extensive dimensions that, when he opened it, his visage appeared to be suddenly cut in two; nose he had little or none, but in lieu thereof a pair of large orifices, which he kept continually loaded with snuff, so that they bore no unapt resemblance to a brace of unlighted pipes; and above this inviting physiognomy predominated a huge white turban, out-Heroding the largest I have ever seen, which, in a multiplicity of swathes, enveloped his ears and the upper part of his head.

Yusuf was the principal furniture-maker at Masulipatam, and by diligence and industry in his calling had already amassed, it was said, a couple of lacs of rupees. Unlike natives in general, he affected much the society of Europeans, and his humorous conversation and frank *bonhommie* made him much liked amongst us. Nothing delighted him more than an invitation to spend the evening at one of our houses, when he would throw overboard the exterior gravity

of demeanour considered essential in all natives of any consideration, and spurning the teetotal prohibition of his prophet, swig down his glass of Hodson with a jollity and gusto worthy of Fat Jack himself. In his youth he had served for some years in the French service at Pondicherry, where he picked up a number of Gallic military interjections, which it was his pleasure to sport on all occasions, so that his conversation with us consisted of a strange mosaic of Hindostani, broken English, and French, the meaning of which it was sometimes difficult to disentangle, especially after honest Sheik had swallowed a glass or two of his favourite tipple.

It might be some six weeks after Fred had so narrowly escaped slipping his wind, that a palanquin entered the compound of his bungalow, was rattled up to the verandah amidst the cacophonous cries and grunts of the bearers, placed on the ground, and from its interior out rolled the rotund corporation of Sheik Yusuf Bahadur.

"Salaam, Gehagin Sahib !—*comment va l'état de vot' sante ? Inshallah !*—you get better now, saar ? *Mille cartouches !* that fever very bad business."

"How goes it with thee, Sheik, old boy? Yes, I'm all right now, thank you. Sha'n't be sodded this time, I hope ;—no thanks to the doctor though—cured myself with beer ; think of that, Sheik !"

"By gosh, I *bhoot khūsh**—werry glad hear you say

* *Bhoot khūsh.*—Very glad.

that, Sahib. Everybody say you must be dead—*ho chooka**—done, finished—*sacré mille bombes!*"

"No—no, Sheik, I don't intend to cut this life until I've sent a few more jorums of beer and brandy-*pani* down your red way. But what's that you've got in your hand there?"

"*Kooch neheeny, Sahib*†—nothing, sir; leetle bill I got in master's name—*diantre!*"

"Is it a bill for me? Faith, I like the sight of one about as well as old Nick does holy water. Sheik, I'm ashamed of you; I thought you had more manners than to bring such a thing to an old friend like me. Well, well, hand it over, old cut-and-thrust."

"Now by the piper of Moses, what's this?" cried Fred, examining with much horror and astonishment the following document, which Yusuf presented to him with a profound salaam:—

"Lieut. GEHAGIN, Dr.

To Sheik Yusuf.

1 Coffin, with ornimint compleat—Rupees ...		75
	Rs.	75

Recd. Payt. SHEIK YUSUF."

"Rupees seventy-five!" murmured Fred to himself, in a kind of bewilderment.

"That very cheaper," cried Yusuf, seeming to suppose that his customer deemed the demand an exorbitant one; "two month gone I make Colonel

* *Ho chooka.*—Done, finished.

† *Kooch neheeny Sahib.*—Nothing, Sir.

Simkin Sahib one coffin, *triple cannonade—do sow rupia,** two hundred rupee I charge Colonel Sahib; but Gehagin Sahib, my friend, *oos wasti;*† therefore, I say myself, this time I make cheaper—put seventy-five rupee—*bus,*‡ that 'nough, *sacre bleu!*"

"Cheaper!" shouted the now infuriated Fred; "why, you heathen vagabond, what do you mean? Who sent you here?"

"Send, saar!" hallooed the disciple of Mahommed, much scandalised at being thus unceremoniously dubbed a heathen by his friend, "Gehagin Sahib." —"Ajitant Wilmot send, saar. Sahib werry sick, know. That time Ajitant Wilmot call me, say, 'Sheik Yusuf, I werry sorry to tell you, Gehagin Sahib got strong fever—doctor say this night, *mur jaega,*§ he will die. One coffin, *juldee bunao,*‖ make quickly; to-morrow morning we bury. Good praaper coffin I make—Sahib never die—no use for him that coffin. What I do? *Mille mille baïonettes,* somebody must pay. I take bill Ajitant Wilmot, Ajitant Sahib order me to come to master; therefore I come."

So saying, the exemplary Mussulman wiped his sable countenance with the end of his waist-shawl, and made an attempt to insinuate a pinch of snuff into his already surcharged nostrils.

"Oh, oh! Master Wilmot sold me this bargain,

* *Do sow rupia.*—Two hundred rupees.
† *Oos wasti.*—Therefore.
‡ *Bus.*—Enough.
§ *Mur jaega.*—He will die.
‖ *Juldee bunao.*—Make quickly.

did he?" said the resuscitated Frederick, calming down a little.—"Deuce take me if ever I heard of a dirtier trick. Here, I say, Sheik, take this bit of paper back to Mr. Wilmot, with my compliments, and tell him, that as he ordered the article he had better pay for it, and keep it for his own particular behoof. He has been looking very yellow about the gills lately, and I'm much mistaken if he won't soon have occasion for it."

"Not a bit of it, Fred, my darling," cried I, popping my head from behind an outside angle of the verandah, where, *perdu*, I had been listening with intense enjoyment to the above colloquy,—"Not a bit of it; I'll live to plague you a trifle longer yet. The story about the coffin is all a hum; and now, my boy, I'm almost even with you for Lady Macbeth."

"Peter, you villain of the world!" said Gahagan, "you deserve to be curried alive for this: I've not felt so uncomfortable since the time I was nearly shopped at Madras by that scoundrel tailor, Garty, for a paltry debt of three hundred rupees. Never mind, my lad, I forgive you. Sheik Yusuf, you scamp!" (shaking his fist at that worthy, who stood by with a hypocritical look of sham repentance on his face), "if you value my friendship and your own beard, let no inducement persuade you to become art and part of an iniquitous proceeding like this again. Boy, open two bottles of beer; I'm thirsty with so much talking."

ENSIGN WILMOT'S FIRST LOVE.

"Good morning, Wilmot; I am going to Pondicherry for a fortnight. I want to see how the French manufacture a curry, and you, I dare say, will have no objection to flirt a bit with the tawny little *demoiselles*."

"I should like it of all things, my dear sir; but I don't think I can get away. I have just returned, you know, from a three months' leave."

"Let not that disturb you, my pearl of ensigns; get your old colonel to send in the application, and I'll speak to the general, who is a friend of mine, to give you division leave between the returns."

"In that case, I am at your service. I fear, however, that I sha'n't get on very well, as my French education has been somewhat neglected, my knowledge of that tongue being limited to two expressions, to wit—*bon jour*, and *au revoir*."

"Quite sufficient, quite sufficient! So tell your boy to put up a few traps—I'll provide you with a *palkee*,* and we'll start to-morrow after *tiffin*."†

* *Palkee.*—A palanquin. † *Tiffin.*—Lunch.

The above conversation took place at Trichinopoly, between myself, then a slip of an ensign of some two years' standing, and Frank Byam, Esq., one of the circuit judges of the district.

Mr. Byam was what the Persians call a *tun purwa*, which being interpreted, signifies "a nourisher of the body;" and seeing that his fleshy tabernacle weighed some pounds beyond sixteen stone, it will be admitted that he had nourished it to some purpose: in fact, he himself was wont to jest upon his own size, and in moments of conviviality would designate himself "the elephant's pup." Profoundly versed was he in the art of concocting a Burdwan stew, learned in kabobs, an adept in the mysteries of curry-making; often have I heard him say, that in default of better materials he would undertake to produce a very sufficient curry from an old boot.

Mr. Byam was somewhat of an original withal; one of his fancies was to sit every morning for an hour or so in a tub of cold water, with a scooped-out pumpkin on his head, which, luckily for this practice, was nearly bald; and thus he would repose in state, smoking his hookah and reading, whilst a bearer agitated a large hand-punkah* before him. This process, he said, "extracted the caloric" from his *corpus*, and kept him cool and comfortable for the remainder of the day.

My arrangements for the trip were soon made, my leave obtained without any difficulty, and next day,

* *Punkah.*—A fan.

about sun-down, off we set, both palanquins well supplied, by the provident care of his honour the judge, with ham, cold fowl, brandy, laul sheraub,* and suchlike creature comforts, to enable us to support "the fardel of existence" by the way. Our journey progressed merrily and without interruption, except that on one occasion, in crossing a small river, which, being deeper than was expected, obliged the bearers to elevate the poles of the palanquins from their shoulders to their heads—the equilibrium of the conveyance that contained my fat friend being destroyed by the change in the centre of gravity, caused it to topple over into the stream,—a method of "extracting the caloric" not quite so agreeable to its inmate as the matutinal tub of cold water. However, he was soon rescued, spluttering and choking, by his grinning and half-frightened attendants, and in due course we arrived without further accident at Pondicherry.

Byam had several letters of introduction, so we did not lack invitations, and accepted one to dinner, on the day after our arrival, from one of the principal government officials. At the appointed hour we presented ourselves, were ushered into a handsomely-furnished room, where several guests were already assembled, and received with much urbanity by our Amphytrion, M. Merival, a meagre, yellow little personage, who spoke through his nose, and clinched every sentence he uttered with an emphatic *hein!*

* *Laul sheraub.*—Claret.

At table, I found myself seated next to our host's only daughter, Mademoiselle Herminie Merival, a charming brunette, with the slightest possible suspicion of native blood in her cheek, a bewitching manner, and a pair of black sparkling eyes, which discharged a dropping fire of glances at me, with such precision and effect, that I soon felt very queer about the *aorta*, my heart commenced to bump against my waistcoat like the piston of a steam-engine.

A small voice snuffled something from the bottom of the table, of which I could only make out, "*Monsieur Vilmotte—potage—hein?*"

"Hem, hem, *bon jour*," said I, taken all aback already.

"Vill you 'ave soup, sare?"

"Oh, ah!" cried I: "I beg your pardon; *au revoir*, if you please."

The spread was really an excellent one; there were dishes savoury and tempting beyond number, whose names I had never heard even in a dream; the wines were delicious, and cooled to the tenth of a grain of saltpetre.

I discovered that my enchantress could babble a little English, which she did in the prettiest manner possible, and our acquaintance sped on apace. It was agreed before we parted in the evening, that, during my stay at Pondicherry, I should impart to her a full and particular knowledge of the English language, she, in her turn, engaging to do me a like

good office with respect to that of France. O, thrice happy Peter!

"Well, Peter, you seemed to get on pretty well with Mademoiselle Merival, notwithstanding your ignorance of French," said the judge, as we sat discussing a glass of grog after returning to our hotel.

"She is, indeed, a most delightful girl," said I, with enthusiasm.

"Ah, ah! my lad, art avised of that? I say, did you taste that *poulet à la Marengo?* the most exquisite thing that ever crossed my palate."

"Such a foot and ancle"——

"Gad, I should enjoy a bit of it now—grilled"——

"A charming figure—I certainly admire a gown with a stomacher when the figure is good"——

"A Burdwan stew dressed that way would be divine. I'll try it to-morrow"——

"What an eloquent eye! how full of soul, feeling, and expression"——

"But, I think, a thought more of chili vinegar in it would be an improvement."

"Chili vinegar!" cried I; good heavens, my dear sir, what do you mean?"

"Peter, my man, you're spoony I see, so go to bed and try and sleep it off."

I went to bed, but not to sleep. Nature's soft restorer refused to visit my eyelids. Musquito-bitten and restless, I tumbled about on my couch, agitated by the crowd of novel sensations that filled my soul; for this was the first time I had ever experienced a

twinge of the tender passion. At length, towards morning, I dropped into an uneasy slumber, and dreamed that Mr. Frank Byam, in full fig as the Archbishop of Canterbury, was performing the marriage ceremony between Herminie and myself, in the Taj, at Agra, while her shrivelled little sire, togged as the Great Mogul, sat cross-legged by, ejaculating approving *heins!* and tranquilly smoking a huge hookah with a snake like a boa-constrictor.

The broad glare of day dispelled these visions. Early in the forenoon, off I hied to visit my charmer. I found her sitting at the piano, practising a lively *chanson*, and looking more fascinating than ever. There was in the room, playing propriety, an ancient spinster, sister to M. Merival, and his very counterpart, snuffle and all, in petticoats. Our lessons on the reciprocity system commenced; the advances in knowledge, however, were all on the lady's side. I remained, by invitation, to tiffin and dinner. "Next day 'twas the same, and the next, and the next;" a fortnight flew by like the wind, and the day of our departure arrived.

Although most horribly in love, and notwithstanding having received every encouragement to do so, I never yet had found courage to declare my attachment to its object. The prospect of immediate departure, however, quickened my faculties and made me bold; and off I marched to throw myself, and my ensign's pay and allowances, at the feet of my beloved one.

She was alone when I entered the room. I sat down beside her; but, alas! all my valiant resolves had oozed and melted away: I was tongue-tied as ever, looking unutterable things certainly, for not one of them had I power to speak.

Herminie, at length, herself relieved my embarrassment. "Peter, *mon ami*," she said, softly, laying her small hand upon my arm.

The light touch of those fairy fingers thrilled through me like electricity.

"*Mon petit* Peter, you yevery day come my father's house—curry and rice eatum—handysqueeze—what for you not make propose?"

"*Bon jour*, my angel," I was beginning, when Mr. Byam rushed suddenly into the room, puffing, and "fiery red with haste."

"*Pardon, Mademoiselle!*" he exclaimed: "you are a nice fellow, Master Peter! here have I and the palanquins been waiting for the last two hours for you to start, and I find you philandering in this fashion!"

"One minute, my dear sir," said I.

"Not a moment! Do you forget that the day after to-morrow is the first; and that, as it is, you have hardly time to save your distance?"

I heaved a sigh, that "seemed to shatter all my bulk," and looked at Herminie; her dark eyes appeared swimming in moisture. I faltered out, "*au revoir*," and the stout gentleman led me off by the arm, "a victim to delicate love."

"You are well out of that, my good ancient," he said, by way of comfort, as we walked down-stairs. "Ah! 'curry and rice eatum, hand-ysqueeze.' I heard it. You're not the first she has said that to, nor will you be the last, I'll engage. It was lucky that I was in time to prevent your making a ninny of yourself."

I never saw Herminie Merival again; and whether she be maid, wife, or widow, at this present writing, I cannot tell. So ended my first love.

MYSELF, PUNCH AND THE KEELEYS.

I DINED with my old friend and schoolfellow, Jack Withers, one day last September. On the previous morning, on my way to the India House, I had run up against a stout individual on Cornhill, and on looking in his face as I stopped for a moment to apologise, an abrupt "This is surely Jack Withers," burst from my lips, followed by—"God bless me! Will Bayfield!" from his. After a hurried question or two, we shook hands warmly and parted, with the understanding that I was to cut my mutton with him next day.

Seventeen years had elapsed since Withers and I had seen or heard of each other. Having a good mercantile connexion, he had pitched upon commerce as his calling, and entered a counting-house in Idol Lane in the same year that I, a raw young surgeon, embarked for India, to seek my fortune in the medical service of the East India Company.

Things had gone well with honest Jack; from a long, thin, weazel of a youngster, he had become a burly, ruddy-faced gentleman, with an aldermanic

rotundity of paunch, which gave the world assurance that his ordinary fare by no means consisted of deaf nuts. He had already, as he told me, accumulated a very pretty independence, which was yearly increasing, and was, moreover, a snug bachelor, with a well-arranged residence in Finsbury Square; in short, it was evident that Jack was "a fellow with two coats and everything handsome about him."

As for me, I was a verification of the adage about the rolling stone; having gathered a very small quantity of "moss" in the shape of worldly goods. I had spent sixteen years in marching and countermarching over the thirsty plains of the Carnatic, in medical charge of a native regiment—salivating Sepoys, and blowing out with blue pills the officers—until the effects of a stiff jungle-fever, that nearly made me proprietor of a landed property measuring six feet by two, sent me back to England almost as poor as I had left it, and with an atrabilarious visage which took a two months' course of Cheltenham water to scour into anything like a decent colour.

Withers' dinner was in the best taste: viands excellent—wine superb; never did I sip racier Madeira, and the Champagne trickled down one's throat with the same facility that man is inclined to sin.

The cloth drawn, we fell to discoursing about old times, things, persons, and places. Jack then told me how, from junior clerk, he had risen to become second partner in the firm to which he belonged; and I, in my turn, enlightened his mind with respect to

Asiatic Cholera, Runjeet Sing, Ghuzni, tiger-shooting, and Shah Soojah.

In this manner the evening slid pleasantly on. An array of six bottles, that before dinner had contained the juice of Oporto, stood empty on the sideboard. Jack wanted to draw another cork, which, however, I positively forbade, as I have through life made it a rule to avoid the slightest approach towards excess in tippling; so, after a modest brace of glasses of brandy and water, I shook hands with and left my friend about half-past nine, for I am an old-fashioned fellow, and love early hours, my usual time for turning in being ten.

When I got into the street an unaccustomed spirit of gaiety at once took possession of me, my general feelings of benevolence and good-will towards all mankind appearing to have received a sudden and marvellous increase. I seemed to tread on eider-down, and, cigar in mouth, strolled along Fleet Street and the Strand, towards my domicile in Half-Moon Street —"*nescio quid meditans nugarum*" sometimes humming the fag-end of an Irish melody; anon stopping to stare in at a print-shop window; and then I would trudge on, chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy, as I conned over the various ups and downs that had chequered my life, since Jack Withers and I were thoughtless lads together, "A long time ago."

In this mood I found myself standing before the New Strand Theatre, my attention having been

arrested by the word "PUNCH" blazoned in large letters on a play-bill.

"What can this mean?" quoth I to myself. "I know a publication called 'Punch' very well, but I never heard of a performance so named. I'll go in and see it. Who knows but it may be an avatar* of the Editor of that illustrious periodical, who condescends to discard his dread *incognito* for the nonce, in order to exhibit himself, for one night only, to the eyes and understandings of admiring London?"

In another minute I was seated in the boxes, and found a crowded audience in full enjoyment of the quiet waggery of Keeley, who was fooling them to the top of their bent, accoutred from top to toe as Mynheer Punch the Great, while his clever little wife—who, by the way, possesses, I think, more of the "*vis comica*" than any actress of the day—caused sides to shake and eyes to water by her naïve and humorous delineation of Mrs. Snozzle.

The curtain had hardly fallen more than a couple of minutes, when a door behind me opened hastily, and a box-keeper thrusting his head, called out, "Is there a medical man here?" "I am one," said I, getting up; "anything the matter?" "Come with me, then, sir, if you please," said he; "a severe accident has just happened to Mrs. Keeley: a falling scene has struck her head, sir, and hurt her dreadfully."

* The Avatar we do not allow—the illustrious periodical we do.—Ed. of "Punch."

"Good heavens!" said I, much shocked. "I will come immediately."

I followed the man to the stage-door, and was ushered into a dressing-room with several people in it, where, extended on a a sofa, lay the unfortunate lady, whom I had but a few minutes before seen full of life and spirits, delighting hundreds with her unrivalled humour and *espièglerie*—there she lay, in the same fantastic dress she had worn on the stage, pale as death—a quantity of blood flowing from a fearful wound on her head, and uttering those low quick moans which are indicative of extreme suffering.

Poor little Keeley stood beside the couch, holding her hand; he was still in full fig as *Polichinel;* and the grotesqueness of his attire contrasted strangely with the anguish depicted on his countenance. As I came forward, he slowly made way for me—looked in my face imploringly, as if to gather from its expression some gleam of hope, and then stood aside, in an attitude of profound dejection.

Having felt the sufferer's pulse, I was about to turn her head gently, in order to examine the nature of the wound, when a hustling noise behind me causing me to turn round, to my infinite dismay I perceived Mr. Keeley, having pushed the by-standers on one side, in the act of performing a kind of Punchean dance upon the floor, accompanying himself with the vigorous chuckling and crowing peculiar to the hero whose habiliments he wore. I was horror-stricken—conceiving that grief had suddenly turned his brain.

All at once, he made a spring towards me, and, seizing my arm, thrust me into a corner of the room, where he held me fast, exclaiming,—

"Wretch! villain! restore me my wife—that talented woman your infernal arts have destroyed! You did for her!"

"Mr. Keeley," said I, struggling to release myself from his grasp—"my dear sir, pray compose yourself."

"Unhappy traitor!" he shouted, giving me an unmerciful tweak by the nose; "look at her silver skin laced with her golden blood!—see, see! Oh, see!"

This was rather too much, even from a man whose wits were astray. I began to lose patience, and was preparing to rid myself somewhat roughly of the madman's grasp, when a new phenomenon occurred.

The patient on the sofa, whom I judged well-nigh moribund, and consequently incapable of any effort whatever, all at once sat up with a sudden jerk, and gave vent to a series of the most ear-piercing shrieks that ever assailed human tympanum.

"*Oh! oh! Mon Dieu! je suis étouffée! Levez-vous donc, monsieur—n'avez-vous pas honte?*"

I started up—O misery!—I had fallen asleep, and my head, resting against a pillar, had slipped down, depositing itself upon the expansive bosom of a portly French dame in the next box, who seemed, by her vehement exclamations, to be quite shaken from the balance of her propriety by

the unlooked-for burthen I had imposed upon her; whilst a *petit monsieur*, her companion, poured forth a string of *sacres* and *sapristies* upon my devoted head, with a volubility of utterance truly astonishing.

I gazed about me with troubled and lack-lustre eye. Every lorgnette in the boxes was levelled at my miserable countenance; a sea of upturned and derisive faces grinned at me from the pit, and the gods in Olympus thundered from on high, "Turn him out—he's drunk!"

This was the unkindest cut of all—thus publicly to be accused of intoxication, a vice of all others I have ever detested and eschewed.

I cast one indignant glance around me, and left the theatre, lamenting the depravity of our nature, which is, alas! always ready to put the worst construction upon actions in themselves most innocent; for if I had gone to sleep in my own arm-chair, pray who would have accused me of inebriety?

How I got home I know not. As I hurried through the streets, a legion of voices, in every variety of intonation, yelled in my ears, "Turn him out—he's drunk!" and when I awoke in the middle of the night, tormented by a raging thirst (produced, I suppose, by the flurry of spirits I had undergone), I seemed to hear screams, groans, and hisses, above all which predominated loud and clear the malignant denunciation—"Turn him out—he's drunk!"

Upon my subsequently mentioning the above adventure to Jack Withers, it will hardly be credited that

this villain without shame, at once roundly asserted that, when I left him on the afore-mentioned night, I was at least three sheets and three-quarters in the wind; adding with praiseworthy candour, that he himself was so far gone as to be obliged, to the infinite scandal of his staid old housekeeper, to creep up stairs *à quatre pattes*, in order to gain his bedroom.

Now this latter may be true enough, for it is probable that friend Jack freshened his nip a trifle after my departure, seeing that he was always something of a drunken knave. As for his calumnious and scandalous declaration, that *I* was in the least degree tipsy, it is too ridiculous to be noticed. I scorn it with my heels—I was sober—sober, cool, and steady as the north star; and he that is inclined to question this solemn asseveration, let him send me his card, and if I don't drill a hole in his doublet before he 's forty-eight hours older, then, as honest Slender has it, "I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else."

THE END.

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